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Calvinist Contact

An independent Christian weekly

FEBRUARY 15, 1991 / 46th year of publication / No. 2247

Conference on Reformed vision invited to see what Jesus sees

Photo: Bert Witvoet

The Holy Spirit has a sense of humour. Conferees Beatrice and George VanderVelde (facing camera) enjoy a light moment with Phylis and Richard Mouw.

Bert Witvoet

BOLTON, Ont. — A seminary professor who teaches Christian philosophy and ethics travelled all the way from Pasadena, California, to this sleepy little town in Ontario to say to a group of men and women on retreat: "O be careful little eyes, what you see." Richard Mouw, currently teaching at Fuller Theological Seminary, explained that this children's song does not instruct little eyes to avoid seeing things, as he used to understand the song, but it tells them to see reality carefully, the way "the Father up above" sees it.

Mouw was speaking to over a hundred conferees who had gathered on a balmy February weekend at the Bolton Conference Centre to focus on the theme: "Linking Spirituality, Vision and Service." The conference was the second in a series of annual conferences called "Serving Christ in the Nineties."

During the first evening's worship service, Mouw expounded on a text from Hebrews 2 that says that God has put everything under the feet of human beings, but that at present we do not see much evidence of this. "But we see Jesus," says Hebrews 2:9, "crowned with glory and honour." And because we see Jesus, we can see this glory reflected in present and future members of his family, concluded Mouw.

The fact that at the time of the conference a war was being waged in the Middle East lent poignancy to the statement that as of now, we do not yet see human beings crowned with glory and honour.

Shaping the vision

The conference was about seeing or vision, and Mouw's following two lectures dealt with how vision is shaped and nourished in the Reformed community. He contrasted the Calvinistic vision, which stresses the sovereignty of God and the radical dependency of human beings, with the Protestant liberal vision of a finite God and a self-perfectable human being.

He admitted that in later years he had learned to accept the fact that vision need not always be very clear on all things, because of the mystery of Jesus and of life.

Mouw further outlined that the vision must be possessed personally by people who spend time in the inner sanctuary with God, that the vision must be shared and held ecumenically with Christians in the other rooms of God's house, and that the vision has to reside in people who show forth the fruits of the Spirit — gentleness and self-control. He rode one of George Bush's election horses as he asked for a kindlier and gentler Calvinism. The request later prompted someone who had come from outside of the Reformed tradition to express the hope that this would not mean "a Kuyper on valium."

Smell every square inch

Mouw doesn't want to see Calvinists lose the cosmic scope of the Reformed vision, and he confessed to still being stirred by the words of Abraham Kuyper that there is not a square inch of creation of which Christ does not say "It is mine." But rather than act out of that vision in a military fashion he urged his audience to lose themselves in society and to smell every square inch of creation. Sometimes we just have to be there, he said, even if it means being quiet and crying with the other person.

Mouw's final point was that living out of the vision and being radical disciples can mean many things — taking a small step in a relationship, struggling for justice in society, having the faith to stand in line for lunch while being incontinent.

A laughing and vulnerable Spirit

Separate sectionals allowed the conferees to break up into smaller groups and discuss the implications of a biblical vision for family, gender roles, media, education and the like. Saturday evening saw the whole group get together in an informal session of sharing and laughter. One conferee remarked that the Holy Spirit, who is at the centre of our spirituality, is at times a humorous spirit.

But there were also a lot of tears during the conference as participants experienced a sense of vulnerability. Mouw called the tears evidence of a new "Doleantie." He was referring to a 19th-century movement in the Reformed churches of the Netherlands which derived their name from an atmosphere of mourning. Our forebears were mourning the heresies of others; now there are more tears of weakness and empathy, said Mouw. He was happy to see Reformed Christians struggling to find an empathetic orthodoxy.

If last year's "Serving Christ in the Nineties" conference is remembered for its soul-baring and soul-cleansing moments, as several participants voiced their fears and hopes for the continuation of a Christ-centred vision for culture, this year's conference will be remembered for the hope that shone through laughter and tears instilled in a group of men and women who saw themselves as fallible saints, never very far from the arms of Jesus.

Iraqi Christians suffer in Gulf war

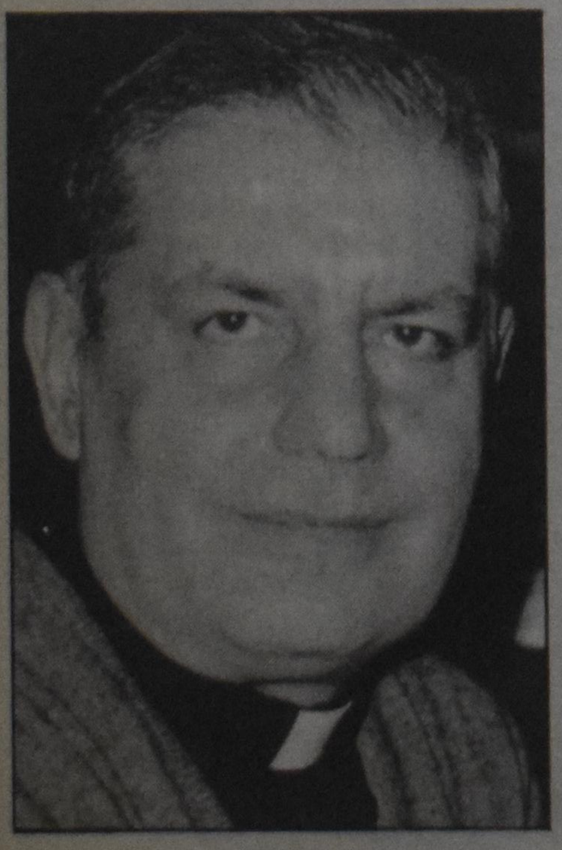

Photo: Robert VanderVennen

Rev. Jacob Yasso talks about Christians in Iraq.

Robert VanderVennen

TORONTO — About one million Christians live in Iraq, says the Rev. Jacob Yasso, an Iraqi pastor in Toronto. Foreign minister Tariq Aziz, the Iraqi leader who met U.S. Secretary of State James Baker in Geneva just before the war started, is a Christian, says Yasso.

The Christian church flourishes in Iraq, drawing on a rich history dating back to the time of Christ. The Magi came from present-day Iraq to pay tribute to the infant Jesus, and they sowed the seed of Christianity when they returned home. The Pentecost story in Acts 2 speaks of Elamites and dwellers of Mesopotamia, who were from what today is Iraq. Rev. Yasso says that when Islam arose in the seventh century it failed to destroy the church in Iraq as it did in a number of other countries.

Baghdad alone has more than 50 churches, but they are now being destroyed in the bombing, Yasso believes. Iraq's Muslims are currently criticizing Iraq Christians there for the destruction caused by Western "Christians" to ancient Christian sites that were untouched by non-Christians in earlier wars.

Ninety per cent of Iraq's Christians are Catholics of the Chaldean Rite. It is the ancient church of the East, for centuries the only church outside the Roman Catholic Church, claiming 100 million adherents by the 14th century. From its centre the Gospel spread to China and Japan. In the 16th century the Chaldean Church reunited with the Roman Catholic Church. Other Christian churches in Iraq include Armenian and Nestorian groups.

Iraqi Christians are educators

Iraqi Christians are traditionally prominent in education and in business, says Yasso. The Christian church flourishes in Iraq even though it is illegal for people to convert publicly from Islam to Christianity. Despite that, the teaching of Christianity as well as Islam is mandatory in all Iraqi schools, and students are not promoted to higher grades unless they pass their religion courses. The church is maintained over the years by the faithfulness of Christians to their beliefs. Christians

See **CHRISTIANS -- p. 2.**

In this issue:

A moving feature by Case Vanderstelt: Manitoulin Island and the little white church . . . . pp. 10-11
John Bolt reviews Adrian Guldemond's recently released collection of essays on religion in the public schools of Ontario . . . . . p. 13

World Vision co-ordinates relief effort for refugees of Gulf War

Alison de Groot

VANCOUVER — World Vision Canada says it is responding to emergency refugee needs resulting from the Gulf War where it is predicted 1.2 million refugees will flee Iraq to seek refuge in Turkey, Iran, Syria, Jordan and Saudi Arabia.

The effort, called Operation Desert Shelter, is hoping to provide aid for some of those victims who need shelter, food, medical help and other essentials according to Kathy Bubel, a spokesperson for the international relief agency.

In September, World Vision dispatched a plane-load of 32 tons of tents, blankets and food to assist 4,500 refugees a day in makeshift camps near the Iraqi border.

Bubel says, since then, World Vision has mobilized its resources worldwide to deal with the victims of this war. World Vision staff in Lebanon and Geneva will co-ordinate the distribution of relief supplies from the World Vision Desert Shelter office in Cyprus, according to a release.

Canadians can help

World Vision plans to work in partnership with agencies such as the Mercy Corps, Venture Middle East and other humanitarian groups. World Vision hopes to solicit contributions from Canadians to purchase World Health Organization medical kits which would be used to provide basic medical care for up to 10,000 people a day for a period of three months.

Officials of the relief agency had planned to meet with Jordan's King Hussein the last week of January; however, that meeting was put on hold. "It's rather academic now to talk about 'what if' scenario's," says Don Scott, World Vision Canada president. 'There will be a need for help and we have to work together to reach children and families caught in the crossfire of the war. Innocent people are likely suffering and desperately looking for shelter and we must respond."

World Vision also says that although the war in the Middle East is demanding attention, the organization has not lost sight of the plight of other countries. Bubel says World Vision is still planning to hold its annual "30 Hour Famine" fund-raiser, scheduled for February 22-23. Canadians, including church and school groups are encouraged by World Vision to fast to bring focus back to such needy countries as Sudan, Ethiopia and Haiti.

During the 30-Hour Famine, participants who are sponsored to fast by family friends and neighbours drink only fruit juices and water while they play games, hold discussions and watch videos about poverty in the Third World.

Funds divided

World Vision says some of the funds raised this year will go to support "Operation Desert Shelter," in the Persian Gulf. Bubel says, this year churches are being encouraged to join in by calling February 17 "Famine Sunday." World Vision is asking congregations to pray for the poor, hold a special service on caring for the needy, or miss a meal to experience a little of what it's like to be hungry. World Vision representatives are planning to speak to congregations about the needs of the poor, and Bible study resources have been prepared for groups wishing to study a biblical perspective on poverty.

Last year, over 60,000 participants in the 30-Hour Famine raised $1.2 million. This year's goal is $1.8 million. World Vision, which works in more than 80 countries, plans to use the funds to provide emergency relief and to establish community development projects around the world, as well as helping Gulf War refugees.

Christians in Iraq

... continued from page 1.

make up six to seven per cent of Iraq's 15-16 million people, Yasso says.

Rev. Yasso was born in Nineveh, in northern Iraq. He taught in Iraq for three years. He studied in Rome and received a doctor's degree in canon law. He was then placed in Detroit, Mich., where he served Chaldean Christians for 24 years. For the past two years he has been serving as pastor of Good Shepherd Parish (Chaldean Rite) in Toronto. He also teaches and is the spiritual leader of all Chaldean Christians in Canada.

There are more than 600 Chaldean Christian families in Toronto, says Yasso, plus a few thousand young men who fled Iraq during the war with Iran. Many families left Iraq in the late 1960s when the current ruling family took over Iraq.

The language used in Chaldean churches is Aramaic, which Yasso says is the "mother tongue" of the church, the same language that Jesus spoke. He points out that the Jewish people have their origins in Abraham and Sarah, whose city of Ur of the Chaldees was located near present-day Bosra. The wives of Isaac and Jacob were also from there. The prophet Daniel lived in Iraq, and Iraq's Tigris and Euphrates rivers are mentioned in Genesis 2 as the locale of the Garden of Eden.

Iraqi Christians are among those suffering terribly in the current war. Yasso believes that all the major cities in Iraq have been destroyed by bombing and that "there are already around one million casualties." Members of his church in Toronto are much concerned about their families back home.

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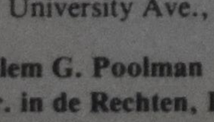

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Back at work after a long sleep

Bert Witvoet

My six-month sabbatical is over and I'm sitting behind my desk in the *Calvinist Contact* office. It will take me a while to get used to this routine again, just like it took me a while to find myself in the "at-rest" mode of the sabbatical. What did I do during those six months?

What if I told you that I did a Rip Van Winkle and slept through the whole thing and that it took my wife a whole day to scrape the cobwebs off my lanky frame? You wouldn't believe me because you read about the four-week journey my wife and I took through Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Romania and a few other countries.

Some of you thought my whole sabbatical was going to be spent in Europe. I must have done a lice-infested job of explaining myself last summer to create that impression. No, the trip only took up one month. Of course, planning for it, shaking off the jet lag and writing about it took another month. That leaves four months of rest to account for.

During the months of December and January I motored through Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia, holding a total of 14 "Meet-the-Editor" meetings in as many localities with Christian Reformed young adults between the ages 25 and 35. I listened and took copious notes as they answered and discussed a dozen or so questions on the Christian Reformed Church, Christian and public schools, Christian organizations, following in their parents' footsteps and other such delectable topics. I wrote reports after each meeting and hope to summarize and publish my findings in the very near future.

While I was on that tour I visited 11 Christian high schools, showing slides of our trip through Europe for the purpose of raising funds for the Hungarian Christian high school called Sarospatak Academy. That leaves two more months.

Well, I can say that I read several books, among them, *God's Dominion* by Don Marshall, *Christian Anarchy* by Vernard Eller, and *Mikhail S. Gorbachev*, by the editors of *Time* magazine. I presented the keynote address at the Alberta Institute for Christian Studies (ICS) conference, led a workshop for teachers in Hamilton, delivered myself of a sermon in my own church and emceed at my nephew's wedding.

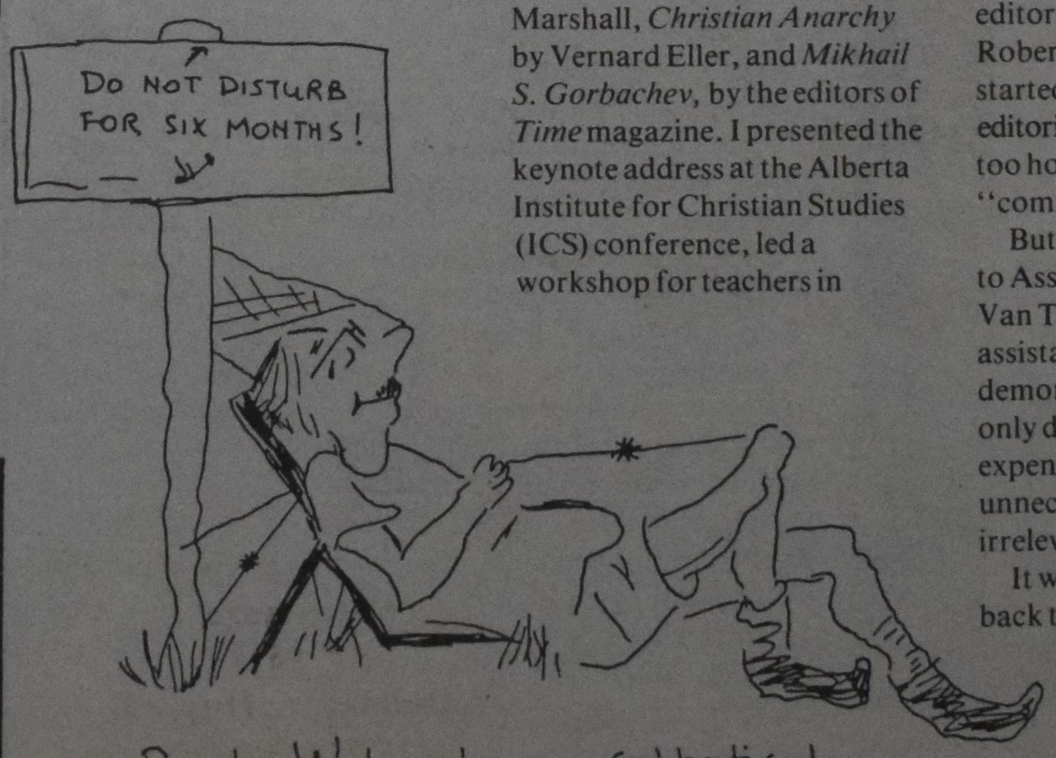
And, last but certainly not least enjoyable, I helped my two sons build a sunroom addition to our house by acting as wood-getter, ladder-holder, cement-mixer, coffee-maker, floor-sweeper, plank-giver, picture-taker and paint-applyer. It's obvious from this list of job titles that I was the one without which the addition would not have succeeded in being transposed from the realm of potentiality to the domain of concreteness and historicity. I have a photo album to prove the quintessential nature of my assignment.

And so it came to pass that I "sabbaticalled" six months away under the sun. I prefer to think of it as six months of Sundays. And behold, it was very good.

I am deeply grateful to the Lord for this time of having been away from regular deadlines and editorial duties. I want to take this opportunity to say a heartfelt thank you to all the guest writers (especially editorial-page co-ordinator Robert VanderVennen) who all started out writing guest editorials, and when things got too hot, ended up writing "commentaries."

But also a special thank you to Associate Editor Marian Van Til who (with the capable assistance of Alison de Groot) demonstrated that I am not only dispensable but also expendable, perhaps unnecessary, yeah, even irrelevant.

It was high time that I got back to secure my job!



Bert Witvoet on sabbatical

1950 **Young People Reunion** 1965

"Seaway Generation"

Cornwall Christian Reformed Church is planning, D.V., to host a Reunion Thanksgiving Weekend **Oct. 12-14, 1991.** Anyone wishing to attend please write:

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Pressreview

Carl D. Tuyl

Monsieur promised an "eight-bottom-line" statement on national unity. We will have quite a smorgasbord of unity statements: the Spicer Forum salad, the Belanger-Campeau beans, the Liberal Allaire artichoke, the "eight-bottom-line" dessert, topped off with a snifter of Bob Rae brandy. Bon appetit!

★★★

Jean Chretien said, commenting on Canada's participation in the battle against Iraq: "The government was ready to rush off to war, but the primary goal of the U.N. must be the rule of law, not the use of force." The *Montreal Gazette* asked with the exasperation of a rebuffed lover: "Will Jean Chretien make up his mind about the war? Does it matter?"

★★★

There was still more unrest in the Senate. The Tory leader in the red chamber had the evil courage to dismiss Pat Carney from a constitutional committee. Senator Lowell Murray now feels the chilling blast of Ms. Carney's wrath.

★★★

Next to the Gulf War — the question of Quebec's place in confederation occupies the editorial pages of our national press. Will Quebec eventually leave the fold? The carrot-and-stick routine of restrictive language laws has failed. English Canada used to put all its eggs in Bourassa's Liberal party basket, but that basket turned out to have a trick bottom as the Allaire report showed.

★★★

Canada is participating in the three-partner free trade talks with the U.S. and Mexico. Trade Minister John Crosbie unleashed his high-octane Newfoundland wrath against one and all who charge that such talks clash with Canada's interests.

★★★

Whoever thinks that Ontario's vegetable garden — Holland Marsh — was named after the Dutch people is mistaken. The marsh was named after Mayor Samuel Holland, the first surveyor general for Quebec. Perhaps Frere Jacques Parizeau wants Holland Marsh to belong to *le Quebec libre*.

★★★

The *Chronicle Herald* of Halifax is one of our trusted sources of information. It records a very strange political platform of the provincial Tory leadership candidate Don Cameron. This man tells the electorate that he wants to be the one who pays the bills. "He must be of Scottish Presbyterian background," muses the *Chronicle Herald*. Dull people those Presbyterians. They want to pay their bills. Ever heard of a politician like that?

★★★

The baby-boomers will wind up in the loving embrace of the Canada Pension Fund by about the second decade of the twenty-first century — just about the time the fund would be flat broke. Out to the rescue rides white knight Michael Wilson with increased premiums. Sleep well, my children, the Minister of Finance stands on guard for you.

★★★

Nova Scotia's fishermen are not satisfied with the so-called boat quotas which limit the catch of every individual vessel. The fishermen have collected about $30,000 in their bid to get their case to court.

★★★

Nova Scotia's economy still expanded in 1990. The province's economy grew by just 1.5 per cent, down from 2.5 per cent in 1989. There was, however, also good news: the number of working Nova Scotians rose to an all-time high.

★★★

The Toronto public health department has found that Greek — closely followed by Portuguese, Chinese, Caribbean and Italian — immigrants live longer than Canadian-born men and women. Diet, culture and government health requirements for immigrants are possible answers to the longevity of immigrants. *Boeren kool* should be good for a couple of added years too, don't you think?

★★★

And to prove that life must go on in spite of the war, the International Window Cleaning Association held its annual convention in San Diego. I wonder whether Mr. Clean was the keynote speaker.

★★★

The *Los Angeles Times*, always on the alert for important sociological trends, reported that more than 1,200 physicians had sent away for a self-taught course in handwriting.

★★★

Gambling on the Persian Gulf War has become a craze in Taiwan. Bookies say the most popular bets are: When will a ground war start? When will Israel launch retaliatory strikes against Iraq? Will the U.S.-led coalition forces win? Some pretty sure bets in there, I guess.

★★★

Czechoslovakia's first auction of state-owned small businesses got off to a roaring start with some concerns fetching up to 70 times the asking price. Eighteen small firms — mainly food stores, grocers and textile shops — were offered to the highest bidder at Prague's city hall. Thomas Jazek, minister of privatization in the Czech regional government, who described the privatization law as the most important piece of legislation in 40 years, said that he was surprised by the high bids. Perhaps Thomas Jazek could help Monsieur sell Petro Canada, which is no prize-piece on the market according to analysts.

★★★

The Russian government has taken the 50 and 100 rouble notes out of circulation in order to beat run-away inflation of 20 per cent, which saw the money supply almost doubled in a short period of time. First exchange for new money amounted to 1,000 roubles which is the equivalent of an average Russian salary. Canada has suspended plans to offer a new line of credit and technical assistance to the Soviet Union because of Moscow's crackdown on the independence movements in the Baltic republics. Mr. Gorbachev let it be known in unmistakeable terms that he was not amused.

★★★

And here is a warning for our female readers. Dr. Michail Lancaster, consultant gastroenterologist in Ireland's Queen Mary Hospital, said that peptic ulcer disease among women jumped by a dramatic 62 per cent in the last 20 years. Take it a bit easier, ladies!

★★★

Tel Aviv's farmers market reopened after a three-day missile break. Peddlers were heard to cry: "Eggplant, one shekel a kilo, may Saddam's name be erased." That curse is one of the most severe in Jewish tradition, reserved for the likes of Hitler and Haman.

Wang Dan, age, 23, the Beying University student who helped spark China's short-lived 1989 democracy movement was sentenced to four years in prison. He was convicted of counter-revolutionary propaganda. News like that makes you appreciate the True North, doesn't it?

★★★

We had some pretty anxious times at the Tuyl gathering in Toronto where in the Wellesley Hospital Mrs. Tuyl underwent brain surgery to remove a set of twin tumors. The operation was totally successful, the recovery was remarkable, and Mrs. Tuyl, generous as always, told the chief neurosurgeon on his rounds that she had marked him with an A-plus. We thank the many who prayed for us and we are grateful to report that God has graciously granted all our requests. Praise the Lord!

Carl Tuyl is chaplaincy co-ordinator for the Christian Reformed Church in Canada and he lives in Kingston, Ont.

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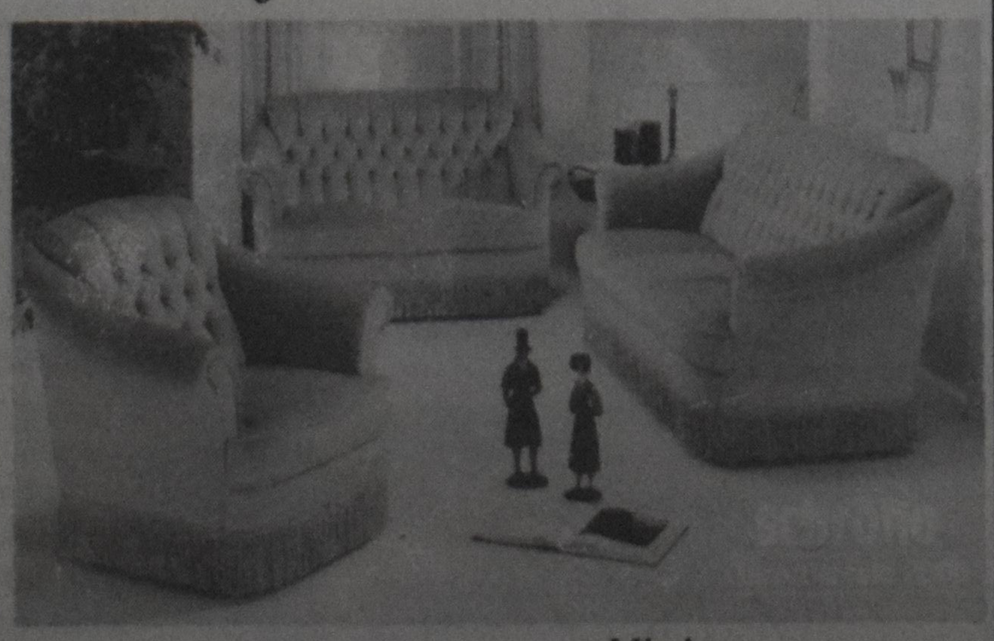

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Winds of meaninglessness blowing in the Gulf

I find it very difficult to listen to other people discussing the Gulf War. It seems that many are walking around with a piece of the puzzle and acting as if that is the whole picture. One person says that Saddam Hussein is like Hitler and must be stopped. Period. Another says that America is leading the allied forces because of its interest in oil. No more discussion. Yet another says that Kuwait deserved what it got because it provoked Iraq by drawing oil from underneath Iraqi soil and, besides, it is an artificially created country with little regard for democratic principles. Cut out further discussion. Again, another is of the opinion that as long as the Palestinian question is not resolved it's hypocritical for the American-led forces to wage war in the name of justice. End of the matter. And yet another person says that if we don't engage Saddam Hussein now we will have to fight him five years from now when he has nuclear weapons. And that's that.

This kind of talk bothers me because I have a hard time seeing the whole picture myself and I'm not convinced that any one else does. Somehow this Gulf thing is bigger than Iraq and Kuwait and longer than four or five years and more complex than all the information that we are fed by governments and news agencies.

Picking sides

What bothers me, too, is that many Christians think it necessary to take sides in this war. The outcome is somewhat predictable. Conservative Christians support the allied side and some of the more liberal Christians endorse Arab sentiments if not entirely the cause of Saddam Hussein. Many think that war is a necessary evil. A somewhat smaller but growing number think that peace can resolve the problem.

What would happen to our discussions, I ask myself, if we as Christians would simply say that there are some problems in the world that defy a solution? What other explanation do we have for the fact that Christ's return will signal the end of the present system and the overthrow of all powers and the destruction of every monument and building ever erected on this earth. That's God saying that outside of Christ, nothing is redeemable on this globe. There are no solutions for the great sickness that hangs like a pall over the nations of this earth.

Surely what is happening in the Gulf is not a war between good and evil. Saddam Hussein thinks it is. According to him, he and his fellow Iraqis are on God's side; Bush and the allied forces represent the forces of Satan. Of course, President Bush operates from a similar self-righteous mentality. A few weeks ago he told a group of religious leaders that the war in the Gulf represented a fight between good and evil; it was right versus wrong. What utter nonsense. There has never been a war in the history of the world that represented a fight between good and evil.

War as solution

The question of a just war does not depend on the moral character of the participants, no more than the justification for an arrest of a criminal depends on the moral character of the law enforcement officer. For all we know, a policeofficer bringing a criminal to justice is more evil than the person he has arrested. Whenever I have seen a person arrested by a policeofficer I am engulfed by a feeling of deep sadness. The arrest does not paint for me a picture of good versus evil, but rather a picture of human failure capped by an authoritative act that tries to restore a semblance of order but does not solve any significant problem.

I feel the same way about the war. There is so much sadness in the realization that the world has failed again on so many fronts, that it's very difficult to gain any satisfaction from a violent attempt at solving a problem that is not the real problem anyway. War seldom solves the real problems that plague humanity. The First World War led to the Second World War, which in turn, set the framework for all the problems we face today in the Middle East. War is like surgically removing sores caused by cancer without addressing the cancer itself.

Not a fight against evil

It takes only a few examples of injustices on both sides to show how evil and sinful we all are. On the American side: blacks make up only 12 per cent of the American population; yet 23 per cent of the American soldiers in the Gulf are black. Why? Because black young men and women, who cannot find a decent job in their society, find it necessary to join the army to be able to create job opportunities for themselves. Now they are exposed to the danger of war in proportionately greater numbers than their white counterparts.

On the Iraqi side: we all know how the Iraqi Kurds were dispossessed, reduced in numbers and made the targets of chemical experiments. Today they have to fight for the greed of the man who showed complete disregard for their humanity. And this is a fight between good and evil?

It would have been much more honest if Bush had said, "Look, we are not any better than the Iraqis, we don't represent the side of good or right, but historically we have been given the power to prevent Saddam Hussein from overrunning Kuwait and from developing nuclear weapons, which in his hands are terribly dangerous; so we will engage him in war, and may God have mercy on us all."

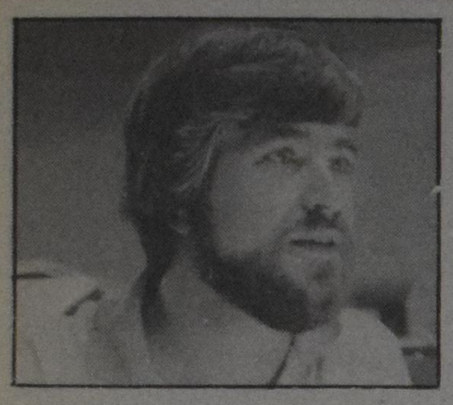
I am not saying that such a position would justify the present war in the Gulf, seeing that economic sanctions were not given a chance to prove themselves, but it might help us see more clearly that the fight against evil lies somewhere else (first of all in our own backyard) — and that it is truly engaged in only when we allow Christ to work in us and through us to bring healing and repentance, justice and mercy, love and righteousness. The rest is fairly insignificant posturing and a chasing after wind. What does the world gain from the Gulf war?

If you ask the Teacher of Ecclesiastes this question he might answer you as follows: "It's all meaningless: what is twisted cannot be straightened and what is lacking cannot be counted .... Here is the conclusion of the matter: fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole purpose of humanity. For God will bring every deed in judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil."

Bert Witvoet

Longer letter

JUST A MOMENT/HERMAN PRAAMSMA



"The easy way out is often the road to hell" (Ancient saying, author unknown).

Have you ever been tempted to take the easy way out? I sure have. On many occasions it seemed a lot easier to avoid an issue rather than to tackle it the way it should have been. There are unpleasant things in life which I'd much rather side-step than face. Confrontation is not, as they say, my bag.

There are times when I know exactly how I feel about what's happening but am tempted to remain silent rather than get involved. It seems so much easier: no mess, no fuss, no bother. It's much safer as well; there's no risk involved. And the rationalizations are usually easy to find: "I don't really have time right now anyway ...;" "These people are old and wise enough to figure things out themselves, who am I to interfere?" "No use to throw my pearls before swine"; or that wonderful old excuse, "I'm sure someone else will get involved."

At heart, it's a problem of being afraid. It's a fear of sounding dumb, fear of looking bad in someone else's eyes, fear of being inconvenienced, fear of being vulnerable, fear of ... you fill in the blanks.

And we take the easy way out. Or what *appears* to be the easy way: non-involvement, silence, avoidance, self-justification.

A question of mercy

Makes you think about the parable of the Good Samaritan. Remember the parade of people who passed by on the other side of the road? People who didn't want to get involved, who literally wanted to take the easy way out when confronted with something problematic.

Jesus told that story in response to a lawyer who felt guilty about his non-involvement with his neighbours, and sought to justify himself. The point, I think, was that getting involved with those things that are placed on your way in life is a question of *mercy*. My neighbour, says Jesus, is the person who shows me mercy, which becomes the motivation for me to go and do likewise.

Which brings us to the heart of the matter. What if God himself had chosen the easy way out? What if he had said after the forbidden fruit episode, "Well, if that's what they want ... after all, I made them good and after my image, it's not my fault, not my business; why bother, they asked for it."

But God, in his rich mercy, took on flesh, became our neighbour and became involved with us totally, all the way to the cross. Our neighbour had mercy on us and told us, "Follow me!" His mercy motivates me to show mercy, to be involved, to walk not on the easy way but on the narrow way. His mercy helps me to fight my own selfish tendencies to be uncommitted and uninvolved. It's no wonder that the apostle writes, "Perfect love casts out fear." May God's compassion overcome all our rationalizations and anxieties as we follow our master.

Herman Praamsma is co-pastor of Immanuel Christian Reformed Church, Brampton, Ont.

Reaping what was sown in the Middle East

It happened. I didn't think it would. I always love Praamsma's "Just a Moment." In fact, I think it is one of the highlights of your paper. But this time I disagree. And even more surprisingly, I disagree so strongly that I feel compelled to respond.

After stating that only the demented revel in war — to which I add my enthusiastic, "Amen!" — Praamsma goes on to confess that he is greatly puzzled by many in our nation who think that America might be engaged in something "illegal and immoral."

"What a strange and warped view of reality!" Herman Praamsma exclaims. And to add insult to injury, he accuses those who have lent their support to the anti-war demonstrations of being spineless, and appeasers of aggressors, and of having turned a blind eye to atrocities.

I must confess that I am one of these people with a warped view of reality. No, I do not like Saddam Hussein. I think that he is a brutal and ruthless dictator. It may well be that he deserves every letter of the dubious title he has earned himself: "The Butcher of Baghdad." And I believe that Kuwaiti people are being victimized. Still, drawing a parallel between Hussein and Hitler is overly simplistic. I know that this is the line we have been fed by the U.S. propaganda machine. But I believe that it distorts the picture.

Hussein didn't come out of nowhere

Let's at least consider the facts. The entire Middle East has been exploited by the West for a long time. Legitimate Arab aspirations have been deliberately ignored, especially since the demise of the Ottoman Empire early in 1920s. At the heart of that exploitation was oil. One only has to consider the Iraq Petroleum Company, in which Britain held a 75 per cent interest until the early 1950s, when that share was reduced to 50 per cent. Arabs have chafed under this Western domination for a long time. Saddam Hussein did not sprout up overnight like a mushroom. An argument can be made that he is the creation or result of European, and more recently American, intervention in the Middle East.

Besides, there are long-standing territorial disputes which include Iraqi claims to Kuwaiti, Iranian and Saudi Arabian territory. If the state of Israel can lay claim to Palestine after nearly 2,000 years of absence then certainly Iraq has certain rights with respect to unresolved border disputes in its case. However, every effort by the United Nations to call an international conference to deal with these claims have been vetoed by the U.S. I suspect that the powerful Zionist lobby in Washington has much to do with this.

This raises the question of morality. Is it moral and legal for the U.S. to lead the world into war when it has consistently stood in the way of every effort at a negotiated resolution of legitimate Iraqi and other Arab territorial claims? My sympathies are with the ecclesiastical and political protestors whom you so quickly label as having a "warped view of reality."

Treasure freedom of speech

Furthermore, Praamsma ignores another important fact. We live in a free country where we (still) treasure freedom of speech. I treasure that freedom. And I admire the courage and the conviction of protestors, including many war veterans, who dare to call into question the present U.S.-inspired war effort. That is what freedom of speech is all about.

The way to respond is not with labels and charges. Instead, let us be engaged in a careful consideration of the facts. We are much too quick with censure and accusations. As a community it is our style to call into question the loyalty of all who take a different stand on a given issue.

I would urge Praamsma, an otherwise respected and wise columnist, to give the benefit of the doubt to those who disagree with him on this matter. And if he feels he cannot do that, then let's at least examine the history which has brought us to this very sad state of affairs in the Middle East. It is so easy and tempting to just call people names. But it is not always just.

Homer Samplonius
Brampton, Ont.

News

Canadian breakthrough in African sleeping sickness

VICTORIA, B.C. (Canadian Scene) — Biochemists from the University of Victoria, B.C,, have scored a major breakthrough in the diagnosis of African sleeping sickness, one of the most dreaded diseases of Africa, according to the International Development Research Centre which funded the research.

University of Victoria biochemists Dr. Terry W. Pearson and graduate student Margaret Kim Liu have developed a relatively simple field test for earlier diagnosis of the disease. Furthermore, their method is equally applicable to the two types of the disease, Gambian and East African sleeping sickness. The University of Victoria team has worked collaboratively with the Kenya Research Institute for Sleeping Sickness.

The disease, which is carried by the tsetse fly, infects more than 50,000 people annually and puts at least 50 million people at risk in 37 countries. Only five million of those are under diagnosis and treatment. It is one of several diseases that severely limit economic development in Africa. It is estimated that up to 30 per cent of the people in some regions have been infected by the disease.

Peter and Marja purveyors of 'Christian porn'

Re: "Peter and Marja are in" [and their intention to openly deal with sexuality in their column: See p. 15 of C.C., Jan. 18, 1991 - Ed.]:

I feel they don't seem to be aware of the fact that *shame* (see Genesis) is a God-given fact. It looks like we are now in for Christian porn. Please don't renew *Calvinist Contact*.

Rinze Bouwma
Sarnia, Ont.

BEYOND BELIEF

WOW! I HAD NO IDEA THE SALVATION ARMY WAS SUCH A MILITANT ORGANIZATION!
OH THAT'S NOT THE SALVATION ARMY...
THAT'S THE SALVATION MARINE CORPS.

Issues

Unique meetings between sex offenders, adult victims of child sexual abuse judged a success

LANGLEY, B.C. (MCC) — Unique "face-to-face" meetings between male sex offenders and adult female victims of sexual abuse in B.C. have been judged a success by the victims and offenders who participated in the encounters.

The program, which brought together seven offenders and six victims between January and June, last year, was sponsored by the Langley, B.C. Victim/Offender Reconciliation Program (VORP). The meetings occurred at the Stave Lake Correctional Centre after Langley VORP Co-Director Dave Gustafson was asked to put together a pilot project to sensitize sex offenders to the effects of their actions on victims.

An evaluation of the meeting, done by Simon Fraser University, was released last month.

"I had shivers up and down my spine just thinking about involving survivors of sexual abuse with sex offenders," says Gustafson. "I wasn't ready to do it until I was convinced that the women who participated would benefit from the experience. As it turned out, they may have benefited even more than the offenders did."

The "Face-to-Face" concept was pioneered by the Kitchener/Waterloo, Ont., VORP in the early 1980s. The purpose of the program is to give victims of similar, though unreleated, crimes a chance to show offenders the effect of their crimes on people. The programs, operated by VORPs in St. John's, Nfld., Kitchener/Waterloo, Winnipeg, Saskatoon and Langley, usually deal with property crimes, although the Kitchener/Waterloo VORP brought a group of sex offenders and victims together in 1983.

'Catalyst toward healing'

According to the evaluation of the Langley program, the women indicated that the program had allowed them to show offenders the effect of their actions on victims. They felt that this information had a positive impact on the offenders. The women also said they not only discovered more about offenders by participating in the meeting, but also more about themselves.

One woman said that the meeting "made me face my abuse and the effect it has had on my life. The program has been a beginning — a catalyst toward my healing." Said another: "The program has empowered me to help others in my situation."

A third added that the program is valuable because "offenders need to see what harm is really done. He needs to hear and see for himself what harm is caused, and maybe he'll think twice next time."

The women agreed that more meetings for sex offenders and victims of sexual abuse should take place.

Consequences of actions

Reaction from the offenders was also positive. Although initially apprehensive about participating in the meeting, the men agreed that they had gained an understanding of the consequences of their actions on victims. Said one offender: "The experience brought victimization into a personal perspective. I could see the devastation resulting from the victimization. I could see the impact — it became immediate."

Said another: "I didn't realize the devastating effect upon victims. The program made me realize the harm that is done to victims of sexual offenses. I now have a better understanding of the consequences of my actions on others."

According to Gustafson, the program is the only one of its kind in Canada that finds currently-incarcerated sex offenders meeting victims of sexual abuse as part of their therapy. He hopes that provincial funding can be secured to run the program again.

The Victim/Offender Reconciliation programs across Canada are supported by Mennonite Central Committee.

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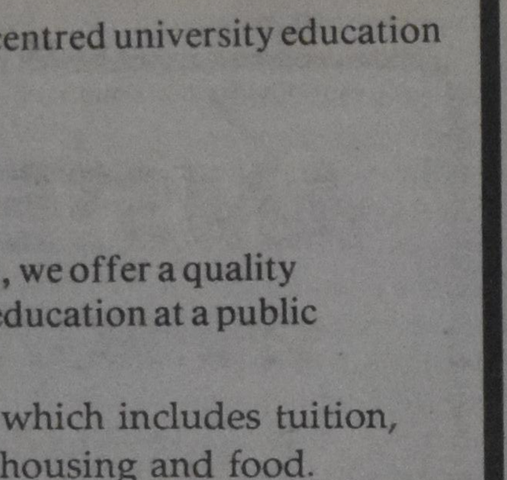

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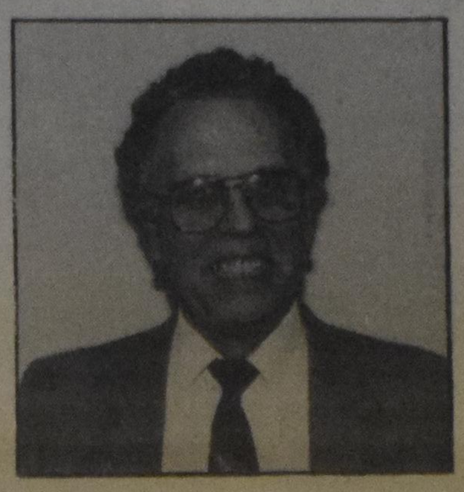


In and around the workplace

Ed Vanderkloet

Labour relations in the church

We are not used to thinking of the church as a workplace. In a way, that's understandable because the church is a faith community, whereas most workplaces are economic undertakings. The difference is an important one as I've tried to explain in previous columns.

Serf or servant

But this does not mean that there is no typical labour relations aspect to the church and its activities. We church people tend to overlook this. Not a few members of the congregation expect the minister to be on call seven days a week. (Just watch the reaction when you expect such a thing from the plumber or your secretary.) I once met a man who actually thought that the minister's job was a cinch, that ministers shake sermons out of their sleeves just like that, and that the rest of their week is filled with driving around and drinking coffee at social visits. And I have encountered quite a few church members who expect a minister's spouse to be present at all church events and to take the lead in all kinds of activities. "After all, we pay them, don't we?"

Of course, this is not the typical attitude of the average church member. Thank God, most of us know better. But I am sure that everyone of the readers has met people like that.

The very fact that such absurdities still survive in church circles is an ominous sign. It indicates that the spirit of exploitation and selfishness, which did so much social injustice to the workers of earlier eras, is alive and well, even in the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Labour of love

But is not the ministry a labour of love? And what about the "calling" aspect of this work? Well, what about it? We'd better be careful with this labour of love and calling argument. Not that there is anything wrong with it — as long as we don't fall into the trap of putting church work into the "calling" category while classifying garbage collection as a mere means of making (or losing) money. Because picking up the garbage, being a carpenter, doing secretarial work or being a homemaker also involves calling and labour of love. The late Prof. J. Waterink once told some parents who consulted him on what career their son should seek that it is far better to be a good garbage collector than a poor lawyer.

We Christians have a hard time shaking off strange notions that work for the church (or the Christian school) is serving the Lord and that, therefore, remuneration isn't so important. Some of us even call it "Kingdom work," implying that the Kingdom of God stops at the factory gate and the office door. And while it is undoubtedly true that most of our ministers' and Christian school teachers' salaries have greatly improved over the years, there are still quite a few who are paid below par.

Who has bewitched us?

Some time ago I saw some shocking statistics of pastors' salaries in other denominations. The word "pittance" is more appropriate to describe these people's incomes. The article which contained these figures lamented the situation but consoled the "servants of the Lord" with the explanation that their calling was a "sacred" one, unlike other work which was described as "secular." I could not help thinking of Paul's exclamation, "You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you?"

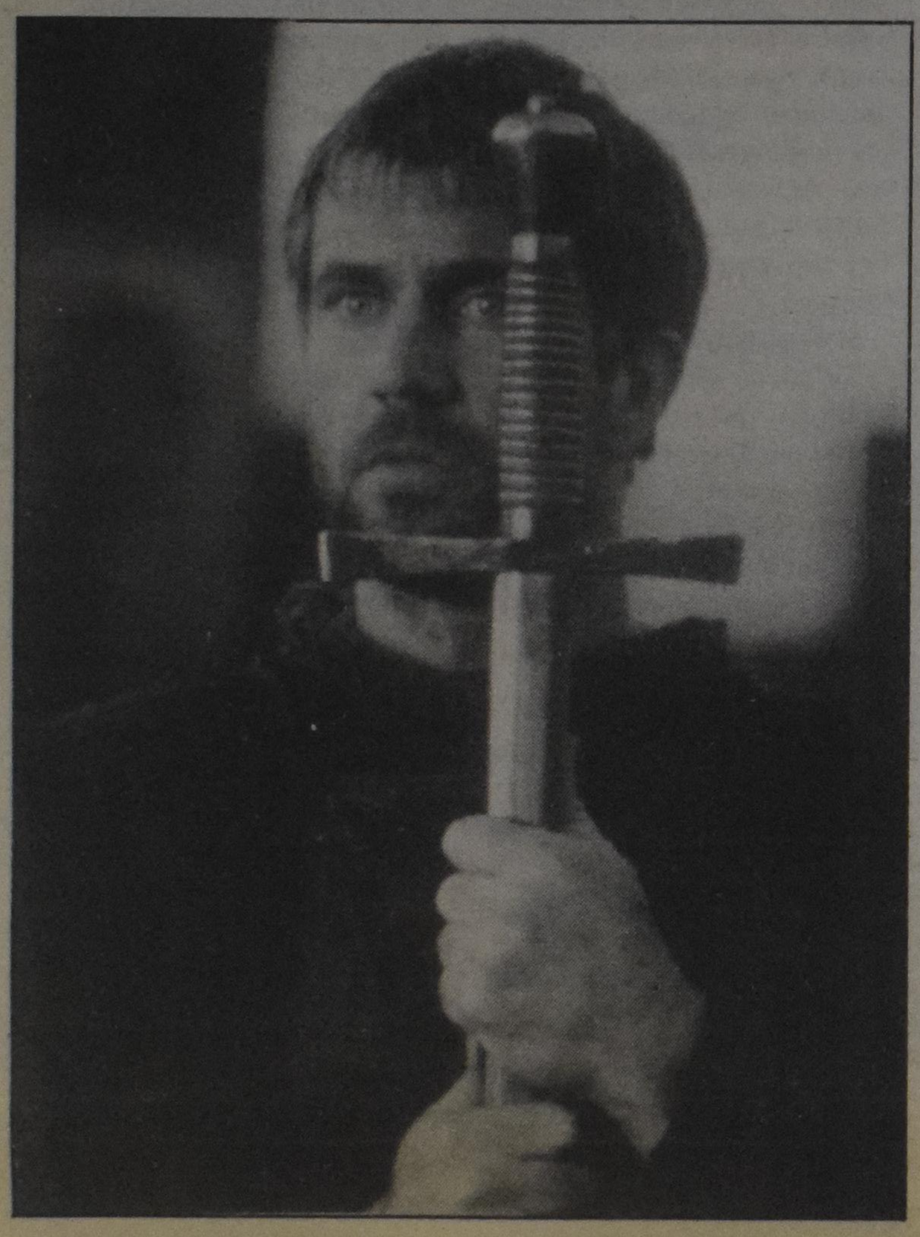
Next month I hope to write more on the topic.

Ed Vanderkloet is a national representative for the Christian Labour Association of Canada.

Cinema/Arts

Cinema summaries

Marian Van Til



Hamlet

Rated PG
Stars Mel Gibson, Glenn Close, Ian Holm, Helena Bonham Carter, Paul Scofield
Directed by Franco Zeffirelli
Based on the Shakespeare play, written 1601

Ignore your natural inclination to dismiss any production of Hamlet which has Australian sex symbol Mel Gibson playing the lead role, and give this film a try. You will be pleasantly surprised. Gibson is no Laurence Olivier but he brings a straightforwardness and immediacy to this most famous of roles.

For those who have only dim memories of the play from school days, or who have never read or seen it, the plot revolves around a young Prince of Denmark who is urged by his murdered father's ghost to avenge that death. Hamlet's uncle is the murderer, driven by his passion for his brother's wife (Gertrude, the queen) and his desire to be king.

Hamlet grieves mightily for his father, a good and just king; he grieves, too, that his mother and uncle marry not two months after his father's demise. Driven by the ghost, Hamlet looks for an opportunity to send his uncle to the eternal damnation his acts deserve; but that is not easy. First, Hamlet must test the spirit to determine whether it is legitimate — or Satan disguised, designed to pull his own soul into hell.

'Mad' innocent

As his *modus operandi* Hamlet feigns madness so that he can observe characters and overhear conversations without being taken seriously. As so often in Shakespeare (and in the real world) one murder begets another, and lies breed more treachery until the story ends in epic tragedy, the innocent and the corrupt dying side by side.

While this abridged film version does not have the peculiar force of, say, a Royal Shakespeare Company live production of the un-cut play, its impact is of a different sort. Visually, it is stunning without becoming too broadly cinematic and without overwhelming the limited setting of the play. There is close attention to historical detail in setting and costume. And it was filmed in and around a medieval castle in Scotland, a place just right.

One can almost *feel* the coldness of the stone walls, the eery dankness of the crypt, the isolation of the place. This could be Denmark or the end of the universe, exactly how it *should* feel. The sound track, too, makes use of medieval-like music which is thoroughly adapted to the environment.

Director Zeffirelli is a master at visual story-telling. To that end, he cuts close to two hours of "extraneous" material from the play, virtually a necessity for transforming a stage drama into cinematic art, but a somewhat controversial move which some will see as violating the integrity of Shakespeare's play.

In that context, Mel Gibson is for the most part quite satisfying as the troubled young Dane. He very much *looks* the part and has a surprising range and control of his facial expressions and features; but on a couple of occasions he badly over-acts.

Except for American actress Glenn Close, who is initially a little too simpering as Gertrude, the rest of the cast are fine British actors who have grown up with or on the stage.

Moral problems determine action

Enough of Shakespeare's worldview comes through to make this an intriguing and unusual film for today's audiences. (If this plot had been hatched in Hollywood it would have received a rejection slip forthwith.) It raises moral, even theological, questions which were very real in Shakespeare's world, but which are all but forgotten in our secular world.

For example, Hamlet is severely troubled by his mother's too-quick marriage to his uncle. He sees it as adulterous (and incestuous because she marries her husband's brother): its timing implies that there had been love between the two before Gertrude was ever a widow. (Incidentally, Zeffirelli's visual implications that there are incestuous feelings between Gertrude and her son makes fanciful dramatic theory but is not the least borne out by, and is even contradicted by, Shakespeare's play and the moral constructs of his world.)

Shakespeare takes the spirit world seriously — and salvation and damnation. Avenging a murder can be appropriate, but cold-blooded revenge for one's own gain is not; nor is, for instance, dispatching a murderer while he's praying (as that would send him straight to heaven).

Though *Hamlet* cannot be said to be a "Christian" play, its worldview is permeated by humanistic and Catholic Christian themes. Moral perameters are obvious, and the action necessary to do the right, while demanding courage (perhaps even one's life on earth), is clear.

Zeffirelli has done us a service by bringing this monumental work to the screen. It allows our mass culture to get a good taste of Shakespeare and it probes questions about human life and its purpose in a way which no Hollywood script writer could ever come close to.

New video resource on Labrador available

WINNIPEG, Man. (MCC) — *Labrador: Homeland or Wasteland?* is the name of a new video available from Mennonite Central Committee (MCC).

The 27-minute video about low-level flying and its effect on the Innu people of Labrador contains four sections from television reports and a section from MCC. It outlines the situation surrounding the Innu protests of the flying, describes the traditional lifestyle of the Innu, reviews the effects of government policies on the Innu, deals with the politics behind the slow rate at which Native land claims are proceeding, and focuses on the injustices being imposed on the Innu which the church needs to address.

It is well-suited for Sunday school classes or home study groups. It can be borrowed from all MCC offices in Canada and from the MCC office in Akron, PA. It can also be purchased for $30 (Cdn.). A comprehensive study booklet on the Innu situation called *Overlooked and Overflown* is also available from MCC for $3 (Cdn.).

New game about MCC raises relief-work money

CALGARY, Alta. — *Global Neighbours* is the name of a new game about Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) which will teach about the needs of developing countries and MCC relief and development work.

Proceeds from the sale of the game, produced by MCC Alberta, will be used for the relief and development work of MCC.

The object of the game is to move a game piece around a game board map of the world. Players answer questions about MCC with the help of information sheets. The game, which is designed for two to six players, takes around three to four hours to complete.

The idea for the game was suggested by the MCC Alberta executive committee to raise funds for MCC and teach about the world-wide service of the agency. Students at Mennonite Bible schools and colleges across the country helped collect information for the game.

Global Neighbours can be purchased from MCC Alberta, 76 Skyline Cresc., Calgary, AB T2K 5X7 and SELFHELP Crafts stores across the country. Cost is $29.95.

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Church

Marian Van Til, page editor

Christian leaders raise outcry against Soviet violence in Baltic states

VARIOUS CITIES, U.S.A. (EP) — Christian leaders in the West are raising an outcry over recent Soviet efforts to crush the independence movements in the Baltics. Earlier it had appeared likely that, among other things, religious freedoms would be restored to those living in the region.

Officials of the Virginia-based Rutherford Institute, a civil liberties organization specializing in religious freedom, addressed a letter to President George Bush, asking him to "take clear policy action in response to the Soviets' brutal crackdown [in mid-January] on the democratic peoples of the Baltic republics."

The letter, signed by John W. Whitehead, president and founder of the organization, continued: "Evidently, the Soviet leadership was well aware of the world's distraction with events unfolding in the Middle East. It would be dangerous to allow the Kremlin to believe that our foreign policy could so easily be overshadowed or distracted."

Although the recent thaw in the decades-long cold war with the Soviet Union complicates U.S. dealings with Gorbachev, Whitehead acknowledged, "the democratic values for which the people of the Baltic republics are shedding their blood provide sufficient grounds for bold action by our nation to do all that can be done to underscore our unwavering support for their drive for freedom."

Whitehead concluded the letter, "Thank you for your active concern and action on behalf of the God-given, inalienable rights of all peoples to live freely in the new world order you have advocated so clearly in recent days."

Officials of the National Council of Churches (NCC) also expressed their concern over the force used by Soviet military forces against those living in the Baltic states. In a January 16 letter to U.S. Secretary of State James Baker, the Very Rev. Leonid Kishkovsky of the Orthodox Church in America, president of NCC, and general secretary James Hamilton of the United Methodist Church, wrote that they experienced "profound dismay about the tragic events two days ago in Lithuania in which a number of citizens were killed and many more wounded by Soviet military units deployed in strategic locations around the capital city."

The two officials noted that they endorse a statement decrying the events in Lithuania, issued January 15 in Geneva by the general secretaries of the World Council of Churches, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, the Conference of European Churches, and the Lutheran World Federation. That statement included a reminder and an appeal to the Soviet government to abide by the decisions of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), to which it agreed Nov. 21, 1990, to "refrain from the threat or use of force," and to "settle disputes by peaceful means."

In conclusion, the statement called upon "our member churches to continue to offer prayers for peace. We ask them to remember the leaders of church and government in the Soviet Union in services of worship and, through acts of solidarity consistent with the teachings of Jesus Christ, to stand by those whose rights and freedoms are being violated."

What will happen to the church?

The Soviet crackdown is sure to effect the churches of the Baltics, says Martha Skelton, a journalist who has covered the Soviet Union extensively and is associate editor of *The Commission*, the publication of the Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

"Gorbachev appears determined to quash the independence movements in the republics, starting with the Baltics," she wrote in a recent report. "Always a presence the Baltic people lived with, Soviet troops began taking over public facilities in Lithuania and Latvia in mid-January this year. At least 13 Lithuanians died trying to stop the troops. The military reality has resurged."

Skelton continued, "Christians — including the 6,000 members of Evangelical Christian-Baptist churches in Estonia and the 4,500 members in Latvia — find themselves and the future of their work for Christ intertwined with these events."

Earlier events led Christians to believe they would have freedom to practise their religious faith without fear of reprisal. Now that hope seems to be in question, Skelton pointed out.

"Once again, a pro-democracy movement is falling under the tank treads of a totalitarian regime," Whitehead wrote in a letter to the media about the situation, alluding to the massacre of Tiananmen Square 19 months ago. "The blood spilled in the streets of Vilnius is a testament to the brazen use of raw power by the KGB and Soviet military to halt a shift in power in the Soviet Union to the people. There also appears to be a resurgence in the harassment of Christians and Jews throughout the Soviet Union."

Whitehead added that "there are many reports that the persecution of Christians in China is on the increase again. But independent religious people always represent the first real threat to totalitarian power."

Whitehead concluded with an appeal to Bush to "start doing more to uphold American values by supporting the drive for democracy and freedom throughout the world."

Wants education with Bible as central textbook

BRISBANE, Australia (EP) — All children should have the opportunity to obtain a Christian education, according to David Magill, executive director of Christian Community Schools Limited. Magill spoke to delegates attending the Asia Pacific Christian Teachers and Leaders Convention in Australia January 14-18.

Speaking at Mayne Hall at the University of Queensland, Magill welcomed educators from Australia and eight overseas countries. He spoke of an education for children "where the Bible is the central textbook and where we accept God's Word for what it is, building our education for our children around it."

Dr. Paul Pang, another keynote speaker at the event, who is founder and president of the Research Institute for Christian Education, told delegates that there are 500 Christian schools in his country educating 200,000 children. He spoke of the vital need to show children the right way to grow, especially due to the uncertainty of Hong Kong's future after 1997, when China will recover the British Crown colony.

Dr. Betty Javalera, general secretary for the Philippines Association for Christian Education, told of the massive impact Christian education is having in her country. More than one-quarter of the country's population — some 60 million children — are of primary school age, she said, and pointed out that one Christian school has experienced an increase in enrolment of 350 per cent in four years.

This church takes its neighbourhood seriously

Photo: John Van Hemert

The congregation of Faith Community Christian Reformed Church, Lantana, Fla., poses after church in the Indian Pines Elementary School where they meet for worship.

C.C. staff

LANTANA, Fla. — Though Faith Community Christian Reformed Church, Lantana, Florida, is part of a traditionally Dutch denomination you won't find many Dutch names or faces here.

The Home Missions-initiated church lists only seven families (30 members) in the CRC *Yearbook*, yet it commonly has a Sunday attendance of 100 people — mostly of Hispanic descent. And Faith's vacation Bible school last summer attracted at least 150 children, 90 of whom were from the neighbourhood.

Faith's pastor, John Van Hemert, is excited about his church's ministry, though he admits the church is struggling financially and finds it difficult to attract and maintain qualified leaders from within the congregation. But they're working hard to overcome that.

Despite those obstacles, the small congregation runs six children's Sunday school classes (plus one for adults), a teen club, an "elementary fellowship," a community Coffee Break program, a food and clothing pantry, weekly services at a government home for the severely handicapped, and a nursing home ministry.

More born-again Christians in U.S.

PRINCETON, N.J. (EP) — The number of Americans who identify themselves as "born-again" has grown, according to a survey conducted for the Princeton Religion Research Center by the Gallup Organization. According to the poll, 38 per cent of Americans polled identified themselves as born-again or evangelical, up from 33 per cent in 1988. The survey also found that 41 per cent of women and 36 per cent of men identify themselves as born-again or evangelical, and that more people believe the influence of religion is declining (48 per cent) than believe it is increasing (33 per cent).

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John Valk

Beating our swords into ploughshares

I have never known war but my family has experienced war. My parents suffered five years under German occupation in W.W.II. My father-in-law lost his father when shrapnel from an exploding bomb left little of him intact. So they, better than I, know the atrocities of war.

They also know the bliss of peace. This they love and cherish most highly. But, they say, not at all costs. They will remain continually grateful to the Canadian soldiers who liberated them from oppression. On occasion they have impressed upon me the need to fight evil with force.

We are again in the midst of war. The U.S.-led Allied Coalition has come to the defence of Kuwait, a country invaded by its larger neighbour, Iraq. At this point any restoration of peace hinges on the withdrawal of Iraqi troops from the occupied territory.

Canada has joined the Coalition as part of its United Nations commitment. So my country is officially at war with Iraq. We are known as a nation traditionally involved in peacekeeping duties world-wide. We nonetheless believe that there are times when aggression must be resisted. With this I do not disagree. Therefore, what must be done must be done.

We like simple pictures

Yet much of what we hear sounds too straight forward, too black and white. Our politicians, and particularly those south of the border, engage in a type of rhetoric that is most disturbing. Our media does little better.

We have been dished very one-sided information — war-time propaganda more than critical analyses. Day after day, the same simple answers are given to the same simple questions. Have we lost appreciation for the grey areas? Is there, for example, no legitimacy whatsoever to any claims made by the Iraqis: in regard to Kuwait, the Palestinian question, American hypocrisy? Or should we not be burdened by these queries?

Attention is focused clearly and without question on the perceived "evil" of Saddam Hussein. But should it be limited only to the evils of Iraq and its leader? Let us not forget those who supplied Iraq with its weapons: nuclear, chemical and conventional. How many Western corporations made huge profits selling killing machines to Iraq? Where was our moral condemnation then? Or is business merely business? We ought to spend as much time and energy searching for peace as we do making our weapons and protecting our selfish standard of living.

We believe in freedom and the right to self-determination. Yet even here at home, many of our actions do not reflect such. Our governments have dragged their feet for some 200 years on the matter of "liberating" the Native peoples of this country. Our political masters have turned guns and tanks on them because they protested the "occupation" of their aboriginal lands. If we insist on pointing a finger at Iraq, let us also admit some of our own hypocrisy.

But we are not good at that. And so in a rather blatant act — call it an act of support, if you will — some students tore down the Iraqi flag at the University of New Brunswick.

Students at St. Thomas University, on the other hand, expressed their concern for the war differently. In the chapel a copy of the Qur'an was quietly placed beside that of the Christian Bible. Candles were lit at a night-time vigil.

The Hebrew prophet Isaiah envisioned a future when people would strive earnestly to "beat their swords into ploughshares and pruning hooks and make war no more." We have not yet reached such a "new world order," though we frequently speak as if we have. Until we reach that era of peace, however, let us be extremely careful about our rhetoric and our actions. Aggression and self-righteousness are not virtues, nor do they befit us well.

John Valk is the Christian Reformed chaplain at the University of New Brunswick, Fredericton.

Church too often urges wives to stay with abusive husbands

Anne Hutten

HALIFAX — A woman screams in pain. Children huddle together tearfully in an adjoining bedroom, seeking comfort from each other while Dad goes berserk. Come morning, the woman hides her bruises and a teenage son threatens little brother with dire consequences if he should tell the teacher about last night's beating.

These scenes from a dramatic video hammered home the pattern of wife abuse to a group of workshop participants at the Canadian Christian Festival last year in Halifax. The workshop was led by sociologist Gail Golding, who is co-ordinator of a project on family violence at the Atlantic Christian Training Centre.

According to Golding, men are only just beginning to admit there's a problem with family violence. She bases this on the fact that men are a minority in any audience she addresses on this issue. Similarly, the church has been slow to respond.

Whether the victims are wives, children or the elderly, abuse represents a betrayal of trust, said Golding. The abuser is always in a more powerful role. Golding chose to focus primarily on wife abuse but said the dynamics of all types of abuse are the same.

One in six is abused

Wife assault can take several forms, said this Atlantic sociologist: physical abuse, sexual abuse, psychological abuse, and destruction of property. The latest estimates are that one in six women is physically abused, ranging from slapping and kicking to beatings and use of weapons. A London study showed that women were beaten, on average, 35 times before they called the police. When they did go for help, most abuse was treated as a psychological problem and the woman was given medication.

Golding quoted a Nova Scotia study which found that pornography played a large role in the sexual abuse of women, who generally didn't feel they had a right to object. As for psychological abuse, she said it undermines a woman's personality through suicide threats, reckless driving on dangerous roads, and threats to the woman's family, children or friends. Destruction of property is often aimed at items with sentimental value, such as photos or a wedding dress. The purpose of all violence, in Golding's view, is to intimidate by threat or force, in order to induce fear and submission.

Violence operates in a cycle, said Golding. There is a calm period, followed by a tension buildup, then a violent episode. After this there's often a period of remorse and calm, a "honeymoon period," as Golding called it. It's the calm periods which hook women, who hope it will always remain that way.

Golding said there are contributing factors to the patterns of wife abuse. The couple often suffers from low self-esteem and there is a mutual dependence even though one partner becomes violent and the other passive and withdrawn. When the community pulls away from such a couple because it's uncomfortable with the abuse, it aggravates the problem. Other facets of the system, such as the church, social agencies and doctors, can contribute to the pattern of violence by the way in which they respond to the woman's complaints.

Society as a whole, including the church, still places a high premium on keeping the family intact, said Golding, and this is sometimes at the expense of a woman's health and safety. In her view, when one partner is being beaten, the marriage is already dead. Yet many churches refuse to consider divorce, advising the woman to go back home and try again.

Church won't take action

Golding faulted the church for not being willing to speak out or take action on wife abuse. Rather than speaking sternly to an abusive husband, or even during courtship when unhealthy patterns develop, the church has emphasized acceptance and love, she charged. Nor does she think pre-marital counselling will help much. It takes place when a couple is madly "in love," rather than a year or two later when problems begin to develop.

Workshop participants validated Golding's views with dramatic examples. One woman said she was beaten so often that her daughter took a drug overdose to cope. A resultant psychiatric visit netted the advice that mother and daughter should go home and work it out. Calling a women's shelter, this woman found she could not be admitted unless she was being beaten at the time.

"They would not accept me because I was able to stand up and talk," she said. "The support systems for me were not there. My church kept saying, 'Work it out, work it out.'" Another said the church provides Marriage Enrichment weekends, but couples enmeshed in violence don't go to such events.

"This whole thing is an issue of power and control," said one male participant. "We have a hierarchy and a structure in all the churches that I know of, including the more liberal ones, a male dominated hierarchy, male-dominated controls. You've got to start with attitudes and values, because you have to change all the attitudes."

Others objected to the old "love and obey" promises of the marriage contract, suggesting this leads to abuse of power. Even the Bible text about women being subject to their husbands is distorted to justify male dominance, said one woman.

"In the way we do all our work in church, we have the opportunity of empowering or disempowering people," summarized one workshop participant.

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Feature

Manitoulin Island and the little white church: startled by grace

Case Vanderstelt

This story is dedicated to those who are suffering from verbal, emotional, physical and sexual abuse, to those who are afraid or feel threatened or consider it a sign of weakness rather than strength to speak out or seek help.

The incidents mentioned are neither a dream nor fiction. The story is a sort of parable based on real people and experiences. However, all names and places have been changed and the individual stories paraphrased to protect anonymity.

The number of people mentioned are a few of those I have been privileged to meet during the last eight years. The majority are inmates, while the remainder is almost evenly divided between members of the community, (mostly of the Reformed persuasion), and participants of retreats.

The experience described in this story is one among many, but one I cannot forget! Should there be only one person whose spirit may be lifted up from hopelessness and despair to a life of hopefulness, renewal and joy, then the effort of sharing this small clip of the "reel" of my life experiences will not have been in vain.

Haven

Some time ago my wife and I escaped the busyness of life and retreated to the tranquillity of Manitoulin Island in northern Lake Huron. We had visited the island before, each time feeling as if we had retreated to a restful haven. The main reason for this, perhaps, was that we deliberately kept ourselves blissfully ignorant of the negative news so commonly provided by the triad of radio, television, and the printed page.

As usual, we gave ourselves some time to settle in and enjoy the rustic setting and its pristine freshness. After a few peaceful days we set out to explore the island a bit more. We visited a museum, discovered an old ferry, strolled through an antique store and wandered into a small-town hardware store. Occasionally we wondered aloud if we should move here.

On the way back to the cottage from an evening walk along a lonely country road, we spotted a small, very old church. Its white paint had deteriorated badly. Seemingly, area wildlife were its most frequent visitors. Still, when Sunday morning came we returned to the church hoping there would be a service of some kind. We were pleasantly surprised to see a few dozen cars around the small building.

Where two or three are gathered ...

As we entered the small church we noticed that the interior was rather barren. There were old pine benches, a large wooden cross made of two cedar fence rails and a portable pulpit one would not want to lean on. The silence and stuffiness gave us the feeling that we were in an ancient monastery.

When an elderly white-haired gentleman entered the sanctuary he received instant respect. He gave us a warm welcome and said, "My name is Paul. Like many of you, I am vacationing on the island, and today I have been asked to lead you in worship and share the message with you." Then he led us in a brief prayer,

"Lord, you yourself have promised that where two or more are gathered in your name you will be there too. May we experience that today. Help us to be doers of your word and not hearers only. And for your name's sake will you grant that, when we leave this place none of us here will be quite the same as the way we have come. Amen.

The theme of this prayer was echoed in the opening hymn, "Lord, speak to me that I may speak." Appropriately, James 5:16 was the text for the sermon: "Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed!"

As usual, I reached for a peppermint and then settled back, expecting nothing more than a bland, theological sermon. I was in for a surprise, as was everyone else! Instead of a well-structured message, complete with appropriate points and complementary illustrations, Paul somehow lived the text with us. He shared with us how the Lord had used a variety of very ordinary people to help him experience God's love and guidance on his journey, and how that in turn had frequently enabled him to become an instrument of new hope and joy to the troubled around him.

Paul reminisced about his youth. His parents did not love him. He recalled a night, at age four, when he snuck out of bed, awakened by another of their heated arguments. One line stuck a knife in his soul. His father shouted, "We never should have had that d... kid!" From that moment on he withdrew from people and hid himself behind the curtain of his fragile exterior.

When his parents died he was sent to an aunt who was also a deeply troubled person; she, too, could not offer the love and support he needed. He struggled through elementary and high school, just getting by. In his college year, however, something wonderful happened. A Greek professor often invited him home, and they would spend many hours enjoying conversation around the fireplace. Here for the first time, Paul felt loved and cared for, unconditionally, by another person. That experience, more than anything else, brought him out of his shell. He became a brilliant student and entered one of the healing professions.

Years later Paul wrote the manuscript of his first book. Before its publication, the person whose opinion he wanted the most was his former professor. After he had read the first chapter the professor said, "Paul, read on," and repeated his request until Paul had read the whole manuscript. Then he said, "My dear friend, Paul, I feel we ought to pray."

"But sir," Paul said, "I did not know you were a Christian."

"I was not," the professor replied, "But from now on I am!"

We could sense the joy as Paul told how God had used an agnostic to help him experience God's grace and love. That incident brought him further out of his shell, and gave him courage to live for God and those around him. And in the surprise of unconditional love, young Paul had also become an instrument of God to lead the professor out of his agnosticism.

'Chance' meetings

Other personal stories followed. Once, while attending a public meeting of a large Christian organization, several speakers had tried to persuade a man that his radical idea was way out in "left field." Paul was invited to speak up and managed to persuade the man to "let go" and to listen to more seasoned minds. Later, however, Paul began to feel very uneasy.

Something inside told him that behind that man's argumentative attitude there might well have been some deeper problems. One battle was won, but an inner war may have been lost. Paul prayed that the Lord would provide an opportunity to meet the man again. A few weeks later, Paul and his wife were out for a Saturday evening drive when they came across a stopped car on the shoulder of the highway. He pulled over and offered his help and realized it was the same man he had debated with at the meeting.

From that "chance" meeting developed a life-long friendship. During the following years Paul's intuition about the man's deeper problems had proven to be correct and the man sought his help on a number of occasions. Gradually, the man became a much more mature and happier person. Another fellow traveller helped, another relationship deepened, another lesson learned.

Then there was the time a woman stepped into his office at the end of a very busy day of counselling. Greeting her, he asked, "How are you? No serious problems, I hope?

"No, not really," she replied.

"That's good," Paul said, "I had so many today already." The hour passed by without much of significance shared or spoken. A few weeks later Paul met the woman in a shopping mall and asked, "Are you feeling a little better?"

"No, not really," she replied, "that day I came to see you, I had just found out that our unmarried daughter was pregnant and that my husband has cancer. Since

you were so tired from other people's problems I didn't feel I could talk to you about them all." Suddenly Paul realized how his preoccupation with his own needs had hindered the woman from sharing her problems with him that day, and she had left still carrying her burdens.

He remembered other times and other relationships where he had let that happen. People had come to him for help, but they went away without healing.

There was one final experience Paul shared. Late one day a man dropped by his office and thanked him profusely for leading him to the Lord. Genuinely surprised, Paul asked, "How can this be? I don't even know you!"

"That's true," the man replied, "but last week when I walked past your office, I watched you for awhile. Suddenly your face broke into the kindest, warmest and most beautiful smile that I have ever seen! And I realized that you must have the 'inner joy' I have read and heard so much about!"

Before leaving the pulpit Paul said, "As you know, we cannot, neither do we have to, carry Christ's cross. Only he can do that; but we are all invited to carry our own after him and this is not always easy. As you know, shared sorrow can become half the sorrow and shared joy, double the joy. With that in mind you are welcome to join me for a while in the room behind that cross."

With that Paul's message ended, but its impact was only just beginning. Most of the people left, but after a few moments of conversation, several of us followed Paul into the back room.

The 'inner room'

We sat together in a circle some on makeshift seats; others sat on the floor. Paul lit a candle and set it in the centre of the room. Here we were, a motley group gathered from every walk of life, coming from as far away as 1,400 miles. We shared a simple meal of bread and ice water, gathered from the supplies of those present. And like the act of communion, it gave us the confidence to trust each other.

A middle-aged couple with their daughter told of their flight from a seedy neighbourhood in a large city.

Next was Eric, a lonely young man from eastern Ontario. His father was a college professor who was so busy that there was practically no time left for him, his only son. Nothing Eric did ever seemed good enough for his perfectionist father. Finally, his anger exploded and in a fit of rage he turned on the gas and blew up his father's house. Inevitably he was required to do some "time inside." "Occasionally," he said, "I still feel like wringing my parents' necks."

Catherine, from Ohio, spoke of the delights she found in her part-time work with the underprivileged, and also of the loneliness and frustration she felt being married to a minister. Often, he, too, was so busy with others that there was practically no time left for her.

Then there was Jim, a robust 35-year-old psychologist from Kentucky. He had quit his private counselling practice because he hadn't been able to resolve the strained relationship between himself and his difficult father.

Richard, an energetic young lawyer from New Jersey, sobbed as he told us about the divorce that loomed dark on his horizon.

And then there was John, a middle-aged priest who shared an extremely painful experience that had transformed his prior unhappy life into a joyous one. It had happened while he was at a clergy retreat. There a kind, older priest who had known John for many years gently asked him if he had any idea why nearly all his waking hours he always wore his clerical collar. The question had stunned him and he could not give a straight answer. The older priest inquired with utmost sensitivity, "Have you ever heard of an inferiority complex?" That was a bulls-eye hit! After a few moments of reflection he had gone outside for a long while and had wept bitterly. He had been arrested in his flight and began to realize that his collar had become a mask. As he became able to lay his mask aside, his life changed.

Monica, a 40-year-old woman from Ontario, shared with us how she had been a victim of incest for some 15 years. She could not suppress her tears when she described some of her horrid experiences. Fortunately, an extensive period of counselling had pulled her through and recently she had begun to find others who had suffered from the same mistreatment. Now, because of her caring, understanding and love, many are referred to her by lawyers, the police and the courts.

Following, a pastor from Texas, in his late 30s, shared his frustration and loneliness. It seemed to him that he was about the only one left who was faithfully guarding sound biblical truths on the walls of Zion. After a long pause he shared, his voice shaking, that he had just discovered his 19-year-old son was gay and is occasionally plagued with thoughts of suicide. While he dropped his head, with a loud cry he prayed, "God, if I am the cause of it, please help me see it!" This was followed with a caring silence.

Jason, an ex-inmate from Manitoba, told of losing four close relatives three Christmas's in a row. He was not only angry with God but had begun to act out his anger towards those around him. In the end he was sent to jail where he became suicidal. While there, an "M2" volunteer (a member of a Christian prison visiting association, called M2 W2, which stands for man to man or woman to woman) visited Jason for many hours, mostly in caring listening. However, Jason's depression remained for quite some time after his release. The volunteer kept up his weekly visits for the next six months.

Every Thursday afternoon at half past four, he dropped in and, without speaking one word, took Jason's socks off, washed and massaged his feet, put the socks back on and left. Through this unusual experience of kindness and love, Jason's depression disappeared entirely. With some additional experienced help, Jason became able to accept his losses and deal with his delayed grief. In time he had entered college and later wrote a moving short story entitled *Blessings a Stranger Can Bring*.

Opening circle

The lives around the circle kept opening. Jack's tragic life, Evelyn's deep devotion, Barbara's troubled memories, Don's new awareness of himself, Ingrid's shocking confrontation ....

Each of us was on a unique pilgrimage. Each of us had a story to tell. And each of us needed the comforting healing of a supporting community.

All this time Paul had not said a word. He had just listened. But he listened in such a way that we knew he cared. He drew us out with his love. Often he closed his eyes and prayed silently. We felt his healing presence.

Five hours passed, but it felt as if it had been only 15 minutes. The candle was nearly gone, but now a ray of sunset glow filtered through a southwest window. Had we known that we would be there that long, we would probably have left right after the service. But now we knew how right it had been to stay. We had heard each others inner souls beating with pain or joy, some of us for the first time we could remember.

Jack climbed on top of his crate and said in a halting voice, "Paul, I would like to thank you a whole bunch for the guts you had in sharing so much of your life with us, and for keeping your mouth closed when we shared our problems and joys with each other. As far as I am concerned, the prayer that you prayed at the beginning of the service, of not leaving quite the same as we have come, has been answered for me!"

For several minutes we just sat there quietly, still stunned and pondering each other's stories. We had shared much hurt and pain — but also much joy. As a result, that afternoon a bond had been established that would endure.

Finally, Paul broke the silence and began to sing in a warm baritone voice,

God moves in a mysterious way,
his wonders to perform
he plants his footsteps in the sea
and rides upon the storm.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;
the clouds ye so much dread
are big with mercy and shall break
in blessings on your head.

His purposes will ripen fast,
unfolding every hour.
The bud may have a bitter taste,
but sweet will be the flower.

The words spoke deeply to us and our tears flowed freely. We felt cleansed and renewed. Our tormented souls rejoiced. We joined in when he started singing again: "God be with you till we meet again."

We had come as strangers; we parted as friends, hugging each other and shedding some tears through our smiles.

Final revelation

As I walked away I wondered, "How did this all happen? How was it that nearly all of us in that 'inner room' had felt free to open up to each other?" Part of it had to be Paul's joy, warmth and openness. Certainly he had taken an awful risk by allowing himself to become so open and vulnerable in his message.

It had never occurred to me that Paul had never told us his last name. He was simply "Paul." As I drove away an elderly gentleman now approached who seemed to be the caretaker of the place. I stopped to chat a moment. "Do you know the last name of today's preacher?" I inquired. In a heavy French accent the old gentleman replied, "Dey say it's Turnyae (Tournier) and he's supposed to live in dem Swiss Alps on the far side of the big pond. But please, don't ask me to spell his last name, even if you gimme a hundred boks, I cudn't."

I was stunned! I felt like the two men in the New Testament who had walked with a stranger one afternoon, only to find out it was the Master. For on this entire Sunday afternoon I had been in the presence of one of the great Christian teachers, who, through his writings, I had felt to be a guide and friend for the last 30 years. I had read most of his books but had never seen a picture of Paul Tournier. And suddenly, in the quiet moments of our afternoon's communion, he had come alive. Perhaps it was just as well that I didn't recognize him. If I had, I'd probably have tried to carry on some academic discussion. Instead, Paul, so much like Christ, shared with me and all of us the greatest gift a person can give — the gift of oneself.

Case VanderSteit describes himself as a "worker with my fellow imprisoned on both sides of the bars." He lives in Hamilton, Ont.

The stubborn worm: a fable

Scissor cut by Lini Grol

Lini Richarda Grol

When the Lord created the world and had decorated it with colourful flowers, shrubs and trees, he was pleased for all was good and beautiful.

And it was.

He had made fishes in every size, round ones, flat ones, long ones, short ones, tiny and big ones, and he chuckled when he saw how swiftly they all, big or small, took to the water and swam away.

Indeed it was good.

Then he made animals with fine fur, strong legs and sharp eyes, and he was ever so happy when he saw them run away to do what they were meant to do.

And it was very good.

Then he made the birds, the bees, the butterflies. He gave them strong wings or delicate, to fly wherever they wanted to go. Long or short beaks and fancy tails; and some he gave frilly feathers and happy voices. How he rejoiced as each flew away, singing or zooming, to do its best. He saw that they were very good. And so they were.

But before all that, the Lord had started with a worm; it was a mere beginning, yet it had crawled away from his loving and creating hands into a little dark corner. The worm was still bare, with no fur, no feathers, no feet nor fins.

"Come here, little one," the Lord called kindly. "I am not finished yet with you."

But the worm pretended to be asleep in his little nook and kept quiet. For a while the Lord went on with his creation, but occasionally he'd call out: "Come here, little one ...." But the worm didn't come.

When the birds and the beasts were all on their way, the Lord again went after the little worm. He clapped his hands and said patiently:

"Come, little one, let me take care of you."

"Don't bother with me," the worm said turning over in his corner, ever ready for another long sleep. "Oh, come to me!" the Lord coaxed, kindly. "I am not finished with you."

But the worm did not stir. Such a thing had never before happened. The rabbits and the robins suddenly sat very still, wondering what the Lord would do to that stubborn little creature. How dare the worm refuse to come? The frogs and the fishes in the water waited anxiously. What would happen to the worm?

The Lord just smiled and said with laughter in his voice, "Come here, you can't go around like that. You have to have a little more to do something with your life." The worm yawned, "Oh, I don't *want* to do anything."

Yes, you do," the Lord said, still smiling. He reached out to find the worm, and added gently, "Come, I'll give you fine, soft fur." He smiled, thinking of all he could give the worm. He could make him to be something unique, with rich colours and soft fur, something children would love to hold in their hands.

But the worm grumbled, "Fur tickles, don't want fur." And he did not come.

The Lord then promised with a twinkle in his eyes, "Then I'll give you feet to scratch with." The worm did not even uncurl from his corner when he muttered, "... don't want fur or feet." Still the Lord smiled when he exclaimed, "But you can't go bare like that."

"Don't want to go anywhere," the worm retorted, snuggling further into his corner.

"But you must want to do something!" The Lord would not give up on the stubborn worm. All the worm said was, "No!"

Then he stretched and wriggled himself until he found a soft spot far away from the Lord and curling himself up again, he thought how clever he'd been to have won an argument with the Lord Almighty himself.

So the worm stayed bare and bold for the rest of his life, and his children and grandchildren are as bare and bold as he was. What is more, they are still proud of the fact to have won that argument with the Lord and boast at every occasion, "We worms are bare and bold, for that's what we want to be. We don't want to do anything, not ever!" Yet the farmer and the fishermen know what to do with them and so does every child that ever played with worms.

Lini Grol is a free-lance writer and scissor-cutting artist who lives in Fonthill, Ont.

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Review article

How secular is Canadian society?
and how do we witness to it?

Religion in the Public Schools of Ontario: Progress in the Courts. Adrian Guldemond, editor. Ancaster, Ont.: OACS/Guardian Press, 1990. $11.95. 180 pp. Reviewed by John Bolt, Calvin Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, Mich.

Calvinist Contact readers may recall an important (and somewhat heated) exchange during the fall of 1989 and spring of 1990 about the role of prayer and religious teaching in the public schools. How should evangelical and Reformed Christians respond to the decisions of Ontario courts forbidding prayer and (a later decision) religion instruction in the province's public schools? Is this official secularization of public education an occasion for lamenting or rejoicing? Should we acquiesce or protest?

Adrian Guldemond and the other essayists in this volume argue that justice (as enshrined in Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms) required the abolition of both devotional prayer and religious instruction because the state should not impose religion or support religious indoctrination.

The decisions of the courts are regarded as striking an important blow for freedom and religious diversity for Canadian citizens. The wishes and religious preferences of a majority — even if considered to be correct — may not be imposed on a dissenting minority (even if wrong).

This volume takes us through the complicated history of religion and education in Canada (especially Ontario), including a careful analysis of the recent court decisions, and concludes: "In a modern pluralist, liberal democracy where there is a distinct lack of consensus on values, no one set — whether high doctrine or low doctrine — should be imposed by the state" (p. 100).

Focus energy on Christian schools

Convinced that attempts to "maintain Christianity in the public schools system presents more problems than solutions for Christians" (p. 107), the overwhelming conclusion of the essayists is that Christians should concentrate their efforts on establishing, maintaining and strengthening separate, distinctive Christian schools, and that government educational policy should encourage such diversity rather than continue the illusion that some Christianity is still taught and fostered in public schools.

There is a clear, stated polemical thrust to this volume. It targets a brief drafted by the Social Action Committee of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC) and submitted to the Ontario government's Watson Inquiry investigating the place of religion instruction in Ontario's schools. This brief was supported by a number of leaders in the Canadian Christian Reformed Church, including the Council of Christian Reformed Churches in Canada which sent a letter of endorsement of the EFC brief to Dr. Watson.

The EFC brief supported keeping compulsory religious instruction in the public school curriculum out of a concern that students in Canadian schools should not be deprived of knowing Canada's Christian heritage and the important role of religion in Canadian life. Guldemond, in his essays, sharply raises the fear that the endorsement of the EFC brief represents a lessening commitment on the part of some CRC leaders to the goals of an independent, separate Christian school movement. He judges it ironic that *some* (Guldemond's own emphasis) Reformed leaders are abandoning their commitment to such schools at the same time "that many evangelicals are beginning to appreciate and recognize the unique contribution of the CRC in Christian education" (p. 166).

How pagan are we, how do we witness?

What is at issue here, in my judgment, is a difference of opinion about two related issues: 1) The state of Canadian society (how secular or pagan is it) and thus its schools; and 2) how Christians are to be an influence or witness in Canadian society.

If our society and culture is still nominally Christian then its institutions should be supportive of the Christian religion and the schools should in some sense promote Christian virtues. The state in its concern for the public good promotes the Christian religion. This represents what could be called a theocratic (rule of God) or Constantinian (after the 4th Century Emperor Constantine who made Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire) vision of a Christian society.

This is also the vision found in the unaltered, original version of the *Belgic Confession* where the magistrate is called to "protect the sacred ministry, and ... remove and prevent all idolatry and false worship; that the kingdom of Antichrist may be thus destroyed, and the kingdom of Christ promoted" (Old Article 36).

In the last century the Dutch Reformed tradition, influenced by Abraham Kuyper, rejected this theocratic vision: 1) It represented an unbiblical view of the state; 2) it was coercive and unjust to minority dissenting religions; 3) it simply did not square with social reality — our society is officially secular rather than Christian.

Instead, a different *strategy* for influencing the public realm was adopted. Rather than individual Christian witnessing in the public institutions, Christians were called to form separate Christian institutions and organizations which had a distinctive but definitely *public* voice. It was judged that the Christian voice within the old-line institutions (public schools, liberal and conservative political parties) would inevitably be muted and effectively silenced by the dominant secular voice.

Individuals vs. institutions

Thus two differing and competing strategies for Christian socio-political witness are before us: 1) Witnessing as individuals in the existing institutions in an attempt to Christianize them or keep them at least open to Christian values; or 2) establishing distinctively Christian institutions as a counter-cultural witness. It is interesting that the Dutch "Gereformeerd" and North American Christian Reformed tradition, which dropped the above-quoted lines of the *Belgic Confession*, has traditionally opted for the second by establishing distinctive Christian schools, while the Dutch "Hervormd" (and North American Reformed Church in America) has kept the unaltered *Belgic Confession* and opted for the strategy of trying to keep the public schools in some sense Protestant and Christian.

While I have real sympathy for the concern that public schools education expose students to the Christian tradition as the great shaper of Western civilization, I am convinced that the Kuyperian strategy is the correct one — today more than ever before. Our challenge today is how to retain our Christian identity in a pluralistic and officially secular culture.

Our situation is post-Christian, post-Constantinian and much more like that of the Early Church (a minority in a hostile environment) than that of the Reformation age. I am thus in basic agreement with the essayists in terms of their fundamental thesis. With Professor Mark Holmes, "I believe that in much of Canada, the only hope for the forceful inclusion of our culture's fundamental values, the values on which our civilization was built, within our schools is the funding of independent schools" (p. 101). I think it a mistake, therefore, to view the court decisions as an *encouragement* to secularism. Rather, they represent *de facto* what is already in place — our public schools *are* secular — vigorously so. The reason: our society is secular, vigorously so. Furthermore, a brief, inoffensive prayer at the beginning of the day and a few hours of bland religious instruction do not provide an antidote to a *curriculum* that is hostile to Christianity.

To the degree that the recent court decisions strip away certain illusions about public education and raise crucial issues about monopoly state control and the need for freedom and diversity in education, they are to be applauded. The history of state-controlled education in Canada is one in which dissenting minorities have suffered a great deal from the conforming majority. The opportunity now arises to correct this injustice.

Nagging questions remain

Yet in spite of my basic agreement with the thrust of the essays in this volume, some nagging questions still remain. There is a sad irony in the fact that the Kuyperian strategy in some sense seems to promote the secularization of public institutions. I deeply regret the fact that students in public schools experience not freedom *of* religion but freedom *from* religion.

For students to go through the public educational system and never be confronted with the crucial formative role of the Christian religion in shaping our Western democratic society is both an educational deprivation and a recipe for social disaster. This censorship, however, needs to be addressed at the *curricular* level (in literature and history, for example) not by *adding* prayer and religious instruction to an otherwise secular curriculum. And finally, I am less enthusiastic about the new Canadian Charter than is editor Guldemond. The liberal tradition of political "rights" for all dissenting minorities is not an unmixed socio-political blessing. It has as much potential for eventual social anarchy as it does for genuine freedom and diversity.

The actual practice of this legal tradition in recent years (both in the U.S. and Canada) ought to raise cautions about any premature celebration of the "Americanization" of Canada's political and legal system. But these (along with some other minor points of disagreement) are issues we need to discuss further and I am willing to be instructed differently. This volume is, let me emphatically insist, essential reading for the Christian and Reformed community in Canada because it goes to the heart of our identity and self-understanding as Christian witnesses in *our society*.

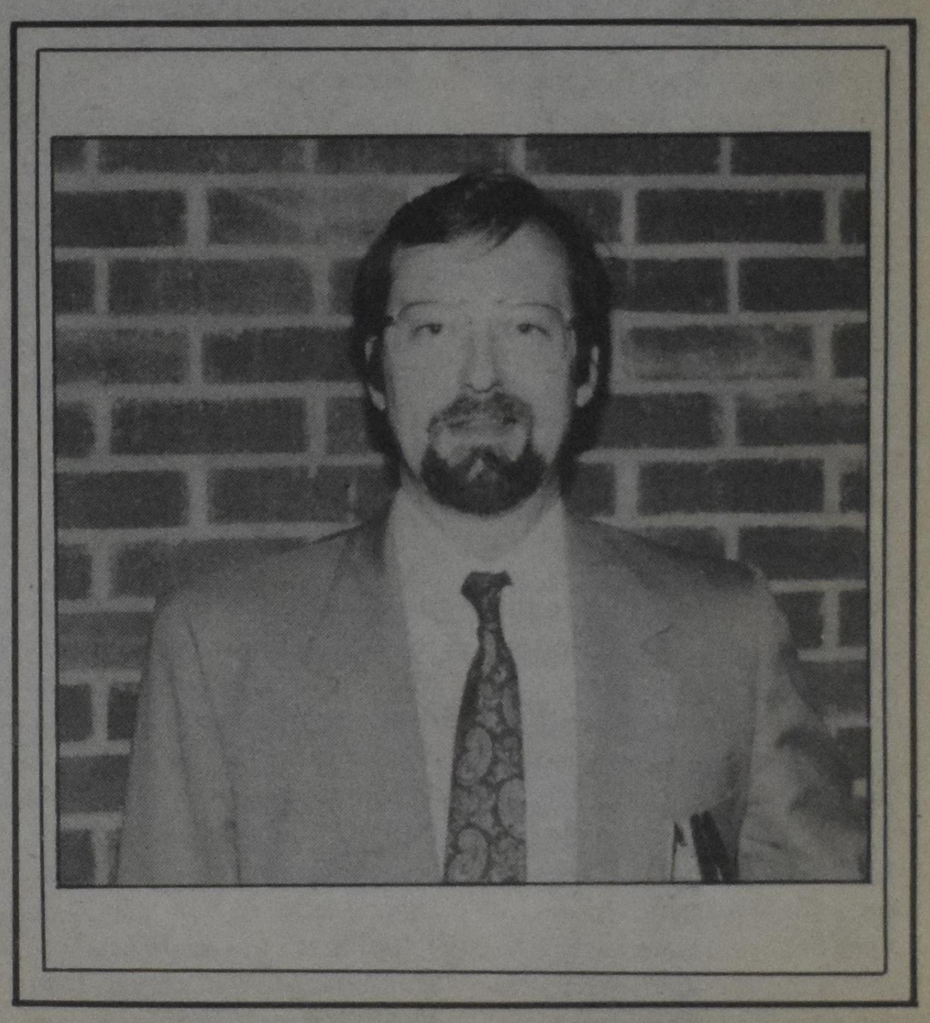

Photo: C.C. files

Adrian Guldemond

Jasmine fragrance near the dustbins of Bangladesh

Roy Berkenbosch

People here call them dustbins. But if you could see, or better yet smell, one of these standard neighbourhood fixtures, you would find that term to be wholly bland, inadequate and even misleading. What is blithely referred to as a mere dustbin is, in fact, the community garbage can: a putrid mass of rotting, stinking, decaying sludge; a veritable sewer of sour slop that is the filthy nest of rats, and the playground, and sometimes latrine, of alley dogs and cats. A friend of mine once described the odor of a "dustbin" as that which could "gag a maggot," a description that I happily added to my repertoire. Dustbin indeed!

But what I really want to tell you about is the jasmine tree that grows right behind the dustbin on our block. Do you know the lovely smell of jasmine? Soft, sweet; it's the kind of heady smell that makes you long for something you can't name. I hadn't noticed it before, but now that Bangladesh is in the season for flowers, that lovely, fragrant jasmine wages a mighty war with the dustbin. I used to hold my breath and lengthen my stride as I passed the dustbin on my daily jaunts around the neighbourhood, but now the jasmine slows me down and inspires a deep breath. Of course, I can never get pure jasmine; the dustbin is too close for that. But air that was once putrid now has a hint of sweetness.

The jasmine of grace

I can't help but allow my experience with dustbins and jasmine to become a metaphor for thinking about Bangladesh. Because, in truth, it is a kind of dustbin here. What else can you say about the grinding poverty, the immense suffering of so many people? People are cast off like human refuse, forced to earn a living picking through the dustbins looking for scraps to salvage. Illiteracy, ill-health, malnourished babies, sadness, death. All the stuff of dustbins. And so I pray for the sweet jasmine of grace to roll back the darker odours that seem so strong. Come Lord Jesus into this place.

But that's not all. When I give myself to that prayer, I am also led to recall the many ways in which I have already detected traces of "jasmine," of grace.

I remember a mother, or maybe she's just an older sister, who daily bathes a crippled boy as he sits in the handmade wooden cart that substitutes for his withered legs. She seems undaunted by his sores or his cries. She is careful and gentle with his feeble body. In her compassion I catch a scent of jasmine.

Every morning, driving to work, I am accosted by several bands of beggars. Always among them are blind old men led by young boys who manoeuvre them safely in and among the cars in search of a few pennies. Some say it is a racket, but I think I once caught a hint of jasmine in the air.

And I think of the many people I've met who once were without hope, but who now earn a living, provide for their children, learn to read and write, manage their own affairs, enjoy better health. Technically it's called "development" and it is what the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC) is doing in Bangladesh. But I'd rather think of it as planting a jasmine near the dustbin, the fragrance of grace.

A rustle in history

I wonder if that is how grace comes: hint by hint, subtle; as slight seasonings, a gentle wafting over the trash. I believe it is. The birth story of the Christ-child seems to say that's how it is. Small beginnings, an initial rustle in history. An eloquent professor once spoke in bold words about the prodigiousness of grace, how it comes not as if through a narrow pipe but rather through a bubbling fountain. Grace, he said, is lavish, abundant, festive. I believe that too, but maybe it is too early for language like that here. Here, in Bangladesh, it is received in smaller portions. That's how I have seen it.

I pray that someday it may be a flood. It would be a nice change from the kind of floods to which people here are accustomed. But even though it is small, the grace I have met is always people-sized. It comes by a human hand, a thoughtful word, a compassionate gesture. Maybe grace will seem more lavish here too, when there are more people to plant jasmines.

The jasmine down the road from my house will only bloom for a season, I know, and then I'll have to cover my nose and quicken my steps again. But I'll keep in mind that the grace of which that jasmine is a gentle reminder knows no season's end. It has come and will stay.

Roy Berkenbosch is the Bangladesh field director for the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC). He lives in Dhaka and supervises rural programs in Jamalpur and Khanjampur.

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small talk

Alice Los

Contemplating war in a safe haven

War in the Persian Gulf region seemed imminent. The deadline at which restraint might be discarded by the opposing forces loomed only hours away. We were sitting around the kitchen table, four boys, their mother, their grandfather and I. A crackling fire in the wood stove nearby kept us warm and comfortable. The lamp overhead spread its light assuringly around us. We were well-fed and safe — and we talked about war.

It preoccupied us. It was what the papers were full of, what the television stations built their newscasts around and people in the streets argued about. The younger boys needed some questions answered on the political backdrop to the unfolding drama. Their grandfather gladly obliged, and in spite of their apprehension the boys could not help but be at least somewhat excited. After all, the possibility of a Scud missile landing in their backyard was non-existent and gasmasks they only knew from pictures. Even so, the smallest huddled closer to his mother.

I looked at the three generations represented in that kitchen which seemed such an inviolable haven. Grandpa was telling the boys about the time he and his two brothers (when they were much the same age as his grandsons now, I realized) found an unexploded firebomb in the field behind their house and how they had taken it upon themselves to dismantle it. Miraculously, they pulled it off without incident. Compared to today's military hardware it had been a simple device. Nevertheless I wondered about the educational wisdom of Grandpa's tale as I watched the boys' keen interest.

Inevitably, the war at hand and the war long past intersected in my thoughts. Any comparison seemed futile. Yet war was war! War meant dead people and maimed survivors, soldiers missing in action, orphans, devastation. Was war ever justified? If so, when? It had struck me already that, in general, men and women my age and older were more resolved that this war seemed necessary than, on the whole, the younger generation was.

Was it because the older people remembered Hitler? Why then hadn't Saddam Hussein been stopped sooner? I myself had to deal with a growing urge to give him his just reward. But here I was, in a cosy kitchen with all my loved ones accounted for. Then too, would this war which was still only a rumor, hasten the end of all wars? Were we perhaps hearing the sound of beloved footsteps coming closer?

Grandpa and I left to go home. Early the next evening we called: is your television turned on? It was. The fighting had started and owing to incredible, modern technology we were watching from fifth row centre as the bombs fell. Our prayers multiplied.

Alice Los lives in Inkerman, Ont.

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Work is the biggest blessing on earth says Victoria barber

Sid Tafler

The following article appeared in the Victoria-based magazine Monday. *It features someone well-known to many readers of* Calvinist Contact — *former columnist Syrt Wolters. We reprint it here with permission.*

On the surface, every person is a simple story. A home, a family, a life, a trade. Twenty-four hours a day, sleep, eat, wake, work and rest.

But scratch below that surface, and the layers peel away to reveal stories of fascination and intrigue.

Syrt Wolters is a barber. He spends his work-day carefully clipping his customers' hair, his back mirrored behind him in the third chair at the Central Barber Shop on Broughton Street near Douglas.

He has thick hands, blush red cheeks, a halo of wavy white hair framed with long, thick sideburns, thin gold-framed bifocals and a lilting, soft Dutch accent.

He may have cut your hair for the past 10 or 20 years and that's all you'd know about him. Syrt (the name means Victor in Dutch) knows that his job is to cut and style hair. Conversation is extra, and only if his customers ask for it.

And if you asked, you might hear a few stories of the improbable, of great human determination, even heroism.

For one thing, Syrt is 79 years old. In a city that is home to a wide assortment of active old people who seem much younger than they are, Syrt is exceptional. His appearance and behaviour do nothing to reveal his age. He stands straight and steady like a man half his years. His skin is clear and smooth, his eyes bright. He wakes up at 5:30 a.m. and bicycles eight miles to work in all but the nastiest weather, stopping off for an hour's swim at the Crystal Pool along the way. And his memory is uncanny. He remembers how many people applied for the first job he got as an apprentice barber in his home town of Enschede: 43. And how much money he was paid: 20 guilders a week. That was 66 years ago.

When he first came to Canada from Holland in 1948, he worked at a planer mill in Houston in northern B.C. He recalls details about wages, production and operating costs from the time he started there until he left six years later.

He became the foreman at the mill, and under his policy of rewarding workers for extra effort, salaries increased to $1.40 from $1 an hour and the cost of production dropped to $4.50 from $6.25 per thousand square feet of wood in a year and a half. Those numbers and the achievements they represent are remarkable; and so is the fact that he remembers them today in precise detail.

Syrt works three days a week, but unlike most of us, who might choose the first three days and enjoy an extra-long weekend, he works Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. When a customer calls, if he's not there, the barbers he shares the shop with — Gus Papaloukas and Jimmy Pavlidis — can always say he'll be in tomorrow. "I think in terms of serving the customer," Syrt says simply.

But the two stories in Syrt's life that stand out like flashing beacons on a rocky coast involve his family and commitment to the highest ideals of humanity.

After the Nazis stormed Holland and occupied his home town in the Second World War, Syrt became active in the underground. If he had been caught, he would have most certaintly faced a death sentence. Among other activities, he helped smuggle Jews to relatively safe hiding places.

Because of his work as a partisan, it was decided his home should not be used to hide Jews. The likelihood of him being caught and his house immediately searched made it too dangerous for all concerned. But as the war progressed, the underground was running out of options, so Syrt took a Jewish family of four into his home. And for 2½ years of what must have been great tension and deprivation, he and his wife Lucinda kept the secret of the family of strangers in an upstairs room from everyone — even their own three small children. The house was never searched and both families survived the war.

The other remarkable story is much simpler, involving a coincidence of events separated by thousands of miles of distance and some 25 years of time.

After 21 years of marriage, Syrt's wife Lucinda died suddenly of a blood clot. A year later, in 1960, Syrt returned to Holland from Victoria and paid a visit to his parents-in-law. There he met a young woman, a border in his in-laws' house, who later became his second wife Diny. So Syrt met both his first and second wives in the same home in the same town. He has seven children, including four from his second marriage, ranging in age from 21 to 51.

Some would call this a strange twist of fate, coincidence, the roulette wheel landing on the same number several times in a row. But not Syrt Wolters. A devout member of the Christian Reformed Church, he says all of life is determined by religion. His sharp blue eyes challenge the listener as he explains his Calvinist philosophy in a single sentence: "Life exists for the sake of the glory of God. Period."

I asked what he does in his spare time. "I have no spare time," he says. He writes for a paper called *Calvinist Contact* and for Victoria's *Christian Info*. and he admits even some fellow believers consider him "old-fashioned, odd, narrow-minded, bigoted, judgmental."

A founder of the Pacific Christian School, Syrt does not believe in public education, which he calls a violation of freedom of religion, because schooling and faith are so intertwined. The government should fund education, but parents should organize the schools and write the curriculum themselves.

If he hadn't come of age in the Depression, when for a time he was the only wage-earner in his family, he would have stayed in school and become a teacher instead of a barber. But he has no regrets. He enjoys his work and will continue to cycle to the shop from his home near Beaver Lake for as long as he does. "People look at work as a necessary evil," he says, snipping brown hair from the back of a customer's neck. "It's the biggest blessing on earth. We're here to serve. When you concentrate on people, the dollar bill will follow along."

Photo: David Van Dyke

Peter and Marja are IN

Dear P & M:

Why is it that working for a living seems to be a test of endurance or a "necessary evil"? I find myself unemployed at the moment. To my surprise, unemployment seems to be a temporary blessing allowing more time for the work, albeit unpaid, one prefers to do! I'm actually enjoying a bit of satisfaction in my jobless state.

Dear Unemployed:

This period of unemployment may be a God-given opportunity to take a new look at your talents and skills. Get some career counselling and come to terms with what you really want to do with the years of employment ahead of you. You need to find a job that is closer to what you *prefer* to do.

Many of us become locked into work we don't like because of the security that comes with the job. Sometimes it takes a lay-off to bring about the changes that someone has subconsciously dreamed of making. Recessions, too, give birth to a remarkably large number of entrepreneurs who "go for it" when they find themselves with nothing left to lose.

During economically difficult circumstances beyond our control we rediscover the truth that God will provide. Consequently, we find ourselves more willing to take risks, since our security no longer comes from a steady salary or company benefits, but from God.

But we caution you against abusing the system by unnecessarily prolonging your UIC benefits. Recently someone told us that he ran into an old friend. When he asked him what he was doing lately, his friend replied: "I'm an artist for the government."

"Really! That's great," came the reply.

"Yeah," said the old friend. "I'm drawing unemployment."

When we heard about this actual conversation we had to agree that this person was an artist of sorts: a con artist! We trust that you long for gainful employment that brings greater satisfaction than collecting pogy.

The wisdom of Ecclesiastes comes to mind:

"I know that there is nothing better for people than to be happy and do good while they live. That everyone may eat and drink, and find satisfaction in all his toil — this is the gift of God" (Eccl. 3:12,13).

May God bless you with the gift of actually being paid for the work you prefer to do.

Dear P & M:

I am writing to you because I am a grandma of six grandchildren, including two South Korean children. Our first grandchild was a nine-month-old baby flown in from Seoul. The intense joy, happiness and cheer these adopted children have brought to their parents cannot be described.

The word "bonding" comes to mind. Is the way we bond with these children any different from the ones born into our family?

Before either child arrived there was a period of expectation. As in pregnancy, we "expected" these children. From the moment we were "expecting," the coming child was included in our prayers. A spiritual bond was being formed and nurtured; a bond of love, concern and acceptance. When we finally saw and held the first child, we gave thanks for answered prayers. Of course, we continue to pray for the well-being of all our grandchildren.

How on earth could we not accept these children, brought into our family in such a special way! None of us — aunts, uncles, or cousins of these two beautiful dark-haired children — have ever expressed or shown any discrimination.

I pray for the grandfather (January 18 column) who finds it impossible to accept his newly-adopted granddaughter. We all have our weaknesses and must forgive each other over and over again.

Peter and Marja, continue your good work. I wish you much strength and wisdom as you raise your own "colourful" family.

Dear Adoptive Grandma:

Thank you for your loving letter. From the sounds of it the blessing is mutual for you and your grandchildren. We hope these gentle words from a soft-hearted grandma can be used to melt the calloused hearts of any relative who finds it difficult to accept an adopted child, whatever the race, into their family circle.

Write to: P & M
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Peter and Marja Slofstra are a pastor and wife team living in St. Catharines, Ont. They are assisted by an advisory panel consisting of: Sam Da Silva, Ineke Brouwer-Parlevliet, Tom Zeyl and Marian Van Til.

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With thanks to our Father in heaven, we welcomed into the world,

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She arrived on Jan. 6, 1991, weighing 9 lbs.
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Doting sister is Katie-Beth.
Proud grandparents for the fourth time are Martha and Albert Tamming of Thornhill, and for the second time, Berta and Kees Vanderstelt of Hamilton.
Home address: 171 Grenadier Rd., Toronto, ON M6R 1R8

Anniversaries

1951 February 28 1991
With thanks to God for his guidance and care through 40 years of marriage,

CORNELIS and JANNY DE VRIES

of Goderich, Ont., together with family and friends wish to announce and celebrate this joyous occasion.
We extend our warm congratulations to them and kindly invite you to join us for an open house in their honour on Saturday, March 2, 1991, from 2 to 4 p.m. at the Fellowship Hall of the Chr. Ref. Church in Clinton, Ont.
Leonard, Jacqueline & Courtney — Toronto, Ont.
Cora & Robert — Beechwood, Ont.

Anniversaries

1951 February 9 1991
With praise and thanks to God, we announce the 40th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents,

JANE and RALPH BALLAST
(nee Welleweerd)

"I am the Lord your God who takes your right hand and says to you, 'Do not fear; I will help you' " (Isaiah 41:13).
Love and best wishes from all of us:
Paul & Clara Buma — London
Michael, Alisa, Nicholas
John & Vivian Vanderhoek — Burlington
Timothy, Sandra, Ryan, Karen
Martin & Sylvia Steenstra — London
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Granum, Alta. Red Deer, Alta.
1951 March 8 1991
With praise and thanksgiving to God, we hope to celebrate, the Lord willing, 40 years of marriage of our parents and grandparents,

ALBERT and ALICE DE WIT

Cecil & Marietta Garrioch — Kinosota, Man.
Bryan & Arlene Hicks — Red Deer, Alta.
Allison, Shannon, Todd
Gorden & Joan Dykstra — Edmonton, Alta.
Jolene, Mark, Laura
Dale & Michelle de Wit — Red Deer, Alta.
We pray that God will continue to bless you and give you many more years of happiness together.
Open house will be held on March 9, 1991, in the social hall of the First Chr. Ref. Church of Red Deer, Alta., from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m.
Home address: 3534-46 St., Red Deer, AB T4N 1L4

1956 February 23 1991
We thank and praise God for blessing our parents and grandparents with 35 years of marriage and pray the Lord will bless them for many more years.

JOHN and LYDIA STROOBACH

With love and congratulations from:
Jerry & Leslie — Nepean, Ont.
Gabe & Evelyn — Bowmanville, Ont.
Joshua, Jordan, Jeremy
Erwin & Angelique — Cobourg, Ont.
Alicia
Eric & Evelyn — Warrensburg, Mo.
Home address: 121 Tremaine, Cobourg, ON K9A 2Z2

1951 February 14 1991
We are thankful to the Lord for giving 40 years of marriage to our parents and grandparents, and pray for God's continued blessings to:

FRANK and SHIRLEY TOLSMA
(nee Wynia)

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Michael, Cheryl, Dwayne, Loren
Tillie & John Stroeve — Picture Butte, Alta.
Jim, Dennis, Kathy
Wilfred & Colleen Tolsma — Lethbridge, Alta.
Karen, Kevin
Reynold & Grace Tolsma — Vauxhall, Alta.
Jeremy, Lisa, Bradley
Henry & Tina Tolsma — Vauxhall, Alta.
Jason, Jennifer, Janice
Ed & Donna Tolsma — Lethbridge, Alta.
Julie, Brian
Patricia & Ralph Hummel — Diamond City, Alta.
Shelley, Janet
Home address: Box 11, Vauxhall, AB T0K 2K0

Anniversaries

Buitenpost Hampton
1951 March 1 1991
Wedding text: "Trust in the Lord, and do good; so you will dwell in the land, and enjoy security. Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart" (Psalm 37:3,4).

ROELF WILLEM HAAN
and
MARIA NEELTJE HAAN-KROON

We, the children, along with the grandchildren, thank the Lord for all his goodness. He has been faithful throughout the years to our parents. We hope to celebrate the wedding anniversary of Opa and Oma on Saturday, March 2, 1991. Open house will be from 2-4 p.m. in Maranatha Chr. Ref. Church, Bowmanville, Ont.
Congratulations Mom and Dad, with love:
Gord & Helen Haan — Bowmanville, Ont.
Janette, Lori-Anne, Joshua, Danielle
George & Wilma DeGroot — Fergus, Ont.
David, Matthew, Phillip
Harry & Hilda Piersma — Port Perry, Ont.
Michael, Kristina, Jeffrey & Carolyn
Mike & Glenna Haan — Orono, Ont.
Timothy, Daniel

Personal

The Consulate-General would like to come in contact with the following individuals.
BAARS, Jenneke Elisabeth, born March 10, 1944, immigrated to Canada on Sept. 27, 1979.
BIKART (or BIKAART(, P., born on Dec. 17, 1957, last known address: Gruntowa 21, Warsaw, Poland, immigrated to Canada in 1990.
DIJKSTRA, Oebele Marten, born in Utrecht on Oct. 7, 1940, immigrated to Canada on June 17, 1964.
EISINGA-DIJKSTRA, Maria Berrendina, born in Utrecht on Nov. 10, 1937, immigrated to Canada on April 22, 1965.
HEYKOOP, Hendrik Leendert, born in Voorburg (ZH) on Dec. 25, 1926, immigrated to Canada on Sept. 26, 1961; last known address: 210 Lincoln Ave. S., Beamsville, ON L0R 1B0.
PAARSMARKT, Alexander Wilhelm, born on May 20, 1925, last known address: 920-95th Ave., Dawson Creek, B.C.
van AKKER, Sara W.J., born on June 14, 1927, immigrated to Canada on Feb. 22, 1953.
ALBERDA, Hessel Jan, born March 14, 1925.
ARENDS, Leonardus Wouter, born Jan. 9, 1929, immigrated to Canada on June 1, 1966.
BAST, Jannetje, born Feb. 21, 1926, immigrated to Canada on May 15, 1957.
van BEEK, Wilhelmus Hendrikus, born July 31, 1927.
BENNIKS, Willem, born April 15, 1926, immigrated to Canada on August 1, 1959.
BERGSMA-VENEMA, Anna, born on Feb. 6, 1926, immigrated to Canada on May 15, 1951.
BERKHOFF, Theodorus Johannus, born August 10, 1926, immigrated to Canada on July 2, 1957.
BEUNDER, Pieter, born August 17, 1927, immigrated to Canada on August 12, 1959.
BEIJER, Karel Franciscus, born August 15, 1925, immigrated to Canada on June 16, 1952.
BOEKHOUDT, Frouwina A., born April 15, 1925, immigrated to Canada on March 5, 1951.
BOUTKAN, Willem, born June 11, 1925, immigrated to Canada on June 22, 1953.
BRAAKSMA VAN SEIJEN-V.D. WEIDE, Meta G., born August 28, 1930, immigrated to Canada on Sept. 15, 1953.
van den BRINK, Albert, born June 17, 1927, immigrated to Canada on June 29, 1960.
BUITENBOS, Hermina Maria, born March 18, 1930, immigrated to Canada on June 16, 1960.
CLEVEN, Frans Jacques Gerard, born Feb. 27, 1925, immigrated to Canada on Feb. 16, 1964.

Obituaries

Leeuwarden, Fr. Chatham, Ont.
Dec. 1, 1900 Jan. 28, 1991
The Lord took home his child, our loving mother, grandmother and great-grandmother,

FOKJE BRUINSMA
(nee Bylsma)

at the age of 90.
Widow of the late Booyen "Ben" Bruinsma, since Feb. 1, 1983.
Psalm 17:8: "Maar 't blij vooruitzicht dat mij streelt, ik zal, ontwaakt, uw lof ontvouwen, U in gerechtigheid aanschouwen, verzadigd met uw godd'lijk beeld."
Andrew Bruinsma
George & Grenda Bruinsma (nee Tuinstra)
Douglas, Ben & Pat, Margaret & Simon, Virginia, Melinda & Len
Marion Bruinsma
Jack & Janet Bruinsma (nee Wattenburg)
Lydia, Ben, Marion
and 13 great-grandchildren
Funeral took place Feb. 1, 1991, at Maple Leaf Cemetery, Chatham, Ont.
Correspondence address: 650 Queen St., Chatham, ON N7M 2K2

The Lord in his wisdom took home unto himself our member and dear friend, at the age of 79 years.

MARGARET HEIDA

That the Lord may comfort and strengthen her children and grandchildren is the prayer of all the members of the Sixty Plus Club of the Chr. Ref. Church, Smithville, Ont.

Quite suddenly on Sunday, Jan. 20, 1991, in his 59th year,

ALDERT LOUWES

was taken from this earthly life.
May our heavenly Father comfort and strengthen his wife Ada and her children Margaret, William & Jackie, Patricia & Gerald, Joanne & John, Steven and also his grandchildren with this great loss.
Sincerely,
Mrs. Greta Bergman
Wilma & Simeon Antuma
Margaret & George Prinsen
Debbie & Jack Bezuyen
Jo-anne & Henk Poortinga
John Bergman
Peter & Evelyn Bergman
Helen & Ron Cherney
Bill & Randa Bergman
and many nieces and nephews
Correspondence address: 3435 Main St., Vineland, ON L0R 2C0

Personal

Born-again Chr. professional, businessman, age 32, would like to meet a sincere, attractive, outgoing, born-again Chr. lady for friendship. Please call Tony at 1-416-858-2854. Will accept all collect calls.

Single Men and Women
if you are over 21 years of age and would like to find a partner in Christian marriage, write to: Christian Marriage Contact Service, P.O. Box 1127, Station B, Burlington, ON L7P 3S9. Please enclose $3.00 for a complete information package explaining our services.
Established in 1967.

Help Wanted

FULL-TIME YOUTH DIRECTOR
First CRC of Calgary, Alta., is expanding its ministry and is seeking a youth director who will provide guidance and challenging Christian programs for our youth. Preference will be given to individuals with post secondary education (ordained/unordained). You are encouraged to contact Ruth Krabbe, 3211 Canmore Rd., N.W., Calgary, AB T2M 4J8; (403) 282-5003.

Wanted: a herdsman, must like to work with cows and able to operate machinery. Huron county. Phone (519) 523-9241.

Help Wanted

Man required to work on cattle feedlot and farming operation in Southern Alberta. Must have experience in farm mechanics and equipment repairs and trucking experience. Phone (403) 223-8800 days or (403) 223-8354 evening or write Sandy Hill Stock Farms, Box 1119, Taber, AB T0K 2G0

Accommodations

Bed and Breakfast
Come back to the Netherlands! Stay close to the city of Utrecht. F. 175.00 per person per week. For info. contact: Mvr. Sneller, Pr. Irene Laan, 53, Utrecht, the Neth. Tel. 011-31-304-43509.

For Sale

For sale: 10' by 35' mobile home near Chr. Ref. Church, Vagebond Park in St. Petersburg, Florida. Completely furnished in very clean condition. One bedroom plus large Florida room; 5 min. from beach and shopping! Asking $6,500 Cdn. Phone: 1-519-539-4516, anytime.

FOR SALE
Steve's Shuffleboards
Try beating those winter blahs with a game of shuffleboard with your family and friends.
A *Sjoelbak* comes complete with stones, stone holder, and rules for a total cost of $99 (includes all taxes and shipping).
A *bar room* model comes complete with stones, rules, shuffleboard dust, and counter, for a total cost of $179 (includes all taxes and shipping).
Please send cheque or money order along with your name, address, postal code and phone number to:
Mr. Steve Winkel
R.R.#2, Gorrie, ON N0G 1X0
or call: (519) 335-3974
** Please allow 2 weeks for delivery.

Marriages

VAN DEN BERG-VUYK:
The children of

MARTIN VUYK

invite family and friends to an open house to celebrate the marriage of their father to

TINEKE VAN DEN BERG

They were married on Feb. 6, 1991, in the Netherlands.
The open house will be held at the Ancaster Chr. Ref. Church on Friday, Feb. 22, 1991, from 8 p.m. - 10 p.m.
Home address: 15 Marlow Dr., Hamilton, ON L9C 2H5

Classified

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For Rent

Professional CRC person has rooms available in fully furnished home. All amenities available. Meadowvale area of Mississauga, Ont. $350 per month. Contact Norm at (416) 567-7857 anytime.

Teachers

AGASSIZ, B.C.: Agassiz Christian School invites applications for the following positions: 1 **primary/intermediate** position (50% kindergarten/50% administration relief including French)
1 **intermediate** position (combined Grade 4/5).
Interested applicants, please send resume and/or inquiries to: Mr. Rick Esselink, Principal, Agassiz Christian School, Box 323, Agassiz, BC V0M 1A0. Phone: (604) 796-9310 (school); (604) 796-3209 (home); fax: (604) 796-2952.

BRAMPTON, Ont.: John Knox Christian School seeks applications for two positions for the 1991/92 school year. Needed are: an **intermediate** teacher and one teacher for a grade level to be determined. French and music an asset. All interested in applying, please forward application and resume to: Mr. I. Witteveen, Principal, John Knox Chr. School, 82 McLaughlin Rd. S., Brampton, ON L6Y 2C7. Phone: (416) 451-3236.

CHATHAM, Ont.: Chatham Christian High School invites applications for possible vacancies, one in **Science** and one in **Phys. Ed.** plus **English or Social Studies or Guidance.** Please submit letter of application to: Fred Spoelstra, Chatham Christian High School, 90 Park Ave. E., Chatham, ON N7M 3V4 or call (519) 352-4591.

CLINTON, Ont.: Clinton and District Chr. School will have a vacancy starting Sept. 1991. Grade level to be determined. If you are interested in a teaching position with our school, please send your application and resume to: Mr. R. Schuurman, Principal, Clinton and District Christian School, P.O. Box 658, Clinton, ON N0M 1L0. Tel. (519) 482-7851.

Teachers

COBOURG, Ont.: Northumberland Chr. School has an opening in the **primary grades** for a full-time teacher who has a background in music. Please call Henry Lise, Principal, at (416) 372-8766 or write: Northumberland Chr. School, R.R.#5, Cobourg, ON K9A 4J8

DUNDAS, Ont.: Dundas Calvin Christian School will have a possible full-time teaching vacancy for **Grade 4** in 1991-92. Please send application and resume to: Mr. J. Zondag, Principal, Dundas Calvin Christian School, R.R.#2, Dundas, ON L9H 5E2. Tel. (416) 627-1411.

FRUITLAND, Ont.: John Knox Memorial Christian School seeks applicants for two possible positions for the 1991-92 school year: a part-time **kindergarten teacher** and a full-time **primary/junior teacher.** Please contact: Mr. Julius De Jager, Principal, at (416) 643-2460 or write to 795 Hwy. #8, Fruitland, ON L0R 1L0 for application forms.

JARVIS, Ont.: Jarvis District Christian School invites applications for a definite **primary** teaching position for 1991/92. (Specific grade level yet to be determined). If you would like to become part of a dedicated team of Christian teachers in a 10-room school, please send your application and resume to: Mr. Garry Glasbergen, Principal, Jarvis District Christian School, Box 520, Jarvis, ON N0A 1J0. Tel.: (519) 587-4444.

KINGSTON: Kingston Christian School has an opening at the **Kindergarten** level for the 1991-92 school year. If you would like to become part of a dedicated team of Christian educators in a new facility for a multi-denominational school, please send application and resume to: Kingston Christian School, R.R.#3, 1212 Woodbine Rd., Kingston, ON K7L 4V2. Attention: H. Pott. Salaries as per OCSTA/OACS salary guidelines.

LACOMBE, Alta.: Required: two teachers for 1991-92.
1) any combination of **Bio., Chem., Math**
2) a **generalist** with combinations of some of the following: Sc., Math, Soc. St., Fr., Ped., Religious St., Bus., Comp.
Consider the challenge and the opportunity of growing with, and placing your stamp on a new school with new facilities. We wish to interview both experienced, and new teachers, who would like to teach students in an all embracing Christian curriculum, in beautiful central Alberta. Send applications to: Central Alberta Christian High School, Box 958, Lacombe, AB T0C 1S0. c/o Jack Vanden Pol, Principal.

LACOMBE, ALTA.: Lacombe Christian School, approximately 330 students in K-9, located in Central Alberta, invites applications from teachers for September 1991. There is an opening in **Kindergarten** and in the **primary grades** and, due to expansion, an opening in the **upper elementary** grades. Applicants must qualify for Alberta teacher certification. Send resume to Wernart van Deventer, Principal, Lacombe Christian School, P.O. Box 1749, Lacombe, AB T0C 1S0. Phone: (403) 782-6531.

Teachers

LANGLEY, B.C.: Langley Christian School, a growing interdenominational K-7 school, located in the Fraser Valley, is inviting applications for openings at the **primary** and **intermediate** levels. A position in **Music/Band** may also be available. Interested applicants, who are certifiable in B.C., should submit particulars to: Leo Smit, Principal, Langley Christian School, 21789 - 50th Ave., Langley, BC V3A 3T2. Phone: (604) 533-2222.

LONDON, Ont.: London Parental Chr. School invites all new and experienced teachers to apply for possible staff openings at the **primary** and **junior** grade level for September 1991. Please send your resume and letter of application to the principal: Mr. Herb Goodhoofd, c/o LPCS, 202 Clark Rd., London, ON N5W 5E4. We look forward to hearing from you.

NEWMARKET, Ont.: The Holland Marsh District Chr. School invites applications for a **primary** teaching position for 1991/92, due to the blessing of increased enrolment. Please send inquiries or applications to: Mrs. C. Bootsma, Principal, HMDCS, R.R.#2, Newmarket, ON L3Y 4V9. Tel: (416) 775-3701.

SMITHERS, B.C.: Bulkley Valley Chr. High School of Smithers, B.C., will be in need of a **Principal** in September 1991. Please send applications with resume to: Mr. G. Ewald, Box 2117, Smithers, BC V0G 2N0

SARNIA, Ont.: Sarnia Christian School invites applications for an **intermediate** level teaching position for September 1991. In addition, there are possible positions in the **primary** and **junior** levels. Ability in the areas of French, Science or Music will be a definite asset. Job-share applications will also be considered. Please send your inquiries, applications and resume including professional and personal references to: Mr. Pete Weening, Principal, 1273 Exmouth St., Sarnia, ON N7S 1W9. Phone: (519) 383-7750 (school) or (519) 542-5518 (home).

SMITHVILLE, Ont.: "Come to the heart of Niagara." **Smithville Covenant Christian School,** now three years old, and still growing, invites you to apply for a **Grade 1** position for the 1991-92 school year, or for possible openings in the **junior** and **intermediate** divisions. Please send your application to: Mr. B. Van Hoffen, Principal, Smithville Covenant Christian School, 6470 Regional Rd. 14, Smithville, ON L0R 2A0. Phone: (416) 957-7796.

VANDERHOOF, B.C.: Christian school **administrator** required for K-8 with approximately 80 students with five teachers. The school is jointly operated by an Associated Gospel Church and an Evangelical Mennonite Church and uses the Society of Christian School B.C. Government approved curriculum. For further information regarding salary, facilities and our community, contact Gerry Thiessen, c/o Rainbow Christian School, Box 1339, Vanderhoof, BC V0J 3A0. Phone: (604) 567-3107 days, (604) 567-9424 nights and weekends.

Teachers

VANCOUVER, B.C.: Vancouver Christian School, a denominationally diverse community, currently offering Kindergarten through Grade 7, is planning to expand to junior high school beginning with Grade 8 in the 1991/92 school year. Persons with a strong **Math/Science** background in education with interest in teaching **P.E., Art or Computer,** are invited to apply. Please direct enquiries to: Ellen Visser, Junior High Program Co-ordinator, Vancouver Christian School, 3496 Mons Dr., Vancouver, BC V5M 3E6

VERNON, B.C.: Vernon Christian School, located in the beautiful Okanagan Valley of British Columbia, is a quickly growing interdenominational school offering educational programs for students in kindergarten to Grade 8. There will be a half-time **kindergarten** teaching position available and an opening in the **primary level** (Grade 2/3) for the 1991-1992 school year. Those interested in acquiring these or any other teaching positions are encouraged to direct inquiries and/or send letters of application to: Elco Vandergrift, R.R.#3, Site 19A, Comp. 4, Vernon, BC V1T 6L6. Phone: (604) 545-7345.

Teachers

WOODSTOCK, Ont.: John Knox Christian School, Woodstock, Ont., will have an opening in the **intermediate** grade level for the 1991/92 school year. Strengths in the areas of science, French and/or music would be an asset. Please send your inquiries and/or resume to: Mr. Henry Tuininga, Principal, John Knox Christian School, P.O. Box 243, Woodstock, ON N4S 7W8. Tel.: (519) 539-1492.

Miscellaneous

Church News

Christian Reformed Church

Calls extended
— to Bethel, Acton, Ont., Rev. Adrian G. Van Giessen of Penticton, B.C.

Change in worship time
Good News, London, Ont.: Morning worship services have been changed to 10 a.m., effective March 3, 1991.

Teachers

Teachers

Edmonton Christian Schools

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

TEACHERS: Applications are invited from interested individuals for teaching positions with the Edmonton Christian Schools. The Edmonton Christian School system is a progressive school system operating three elementary junior high schools and one senior high school. Applications are being accepted for all positions. The Edmonton Christian Schools provide a good salary and benefit package with ample opportunity for professional development, growth and advancement.

ADMINISTRATORS: Educators interested in administrative positions are invited to inquire about possible openings. The Edmonton Christian Schools are dynamic schools allowing opportunity for interested educators to advance into administrative positions.

For applications or further inquiries contact:
Mr. P.C. Prinsen
North Edmonton Christian School
13470 Fort Rd., Edmonton, AB T5A 1C5
Phone: (403) 475-2818; Fax: (403) 478-1728

DUNCAN CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

The Duncan Christian School Association operates a Christian interdenominational day school, from K-12, with approximately 270 students. We invite applications for the following positions:

SECONDARY: Junior Secondary Science
Secondary Math
ELEMENTARY: Possible vacancies for intermediate Grades 4-7
Special Education Teacher also needed

The qualifying applicants should be eligible for B.C. certification. Please send applications, resumes and references to:

ELEMENTARY
Mrs. J.M. Spyksma
P.O. Box 844
Duncan, BC V9L 3Y2

SECONDARY
Mr. H. Fritschy
P.O. Box 844
Duncan, BC V9L 3Y2

Classified

Teachers

Teaching Positions

Calvin Christian School, Hamilton, Ont.,

invites candidates for teaching positions to submit their resumes for probable openings in our **Junior** and **Intermediate** departments. CCS has served the Christian community of Hamilton and district since 1952 and currently has an enrolment of 360 students from K-8. If you would like to join our dynamic team of Christian teachers who work together to provide high-quality Christian education, please reply to:

A. Ben Harsevoort, Principal, CCS
547 West 5th St., Hamilton, ON L9C 3P7

The Society for Chr. Education

in Southern Alberta

operating **Immanuel Chr. School (Lethbridge)**
and **Taber Chr. School**
invites applications for the following possible openings.
Junior Senior Highschool. Chemistry/Physics/Science, Math/Phys. Ed., English/Drama/Bible, plus Grade 1, 4 and 5.
We also need a teacher for curriculum responsibilities in both schools.

Please forward all correspondence to:
Mr. H. Konynenbelt
802 6th Ave. N., Lethbridge, AB T1H 0S1
or call: (403) 327-4223 or (403) 328-4783

WILLOWDALE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

TEACHING POSITION

Willowdale Christian School invites applications for vacancies at the

JUNIOR or INTERMEDIATE level

for 1991-1992

Interested persons should send resume to:
Rick Nonnekes, Principal
Willowdale Christian School
60 Hilda Ave., North York, ON M2M 1V5
or call:
(416) 222-1711 or (416) 222-1939

Belleville & District Christian School

Belleville, Ont.,

will be in need of a

PRINCIPAL

in September 1991.

Please send application with resume to:
Mr. Joe Bouma
c/o Belleville & District Christian School
R.R.#5, Belleville, ON K8N 4Z5

Toronto District Christian High School

T.D.C.H., a progressive Christian Secondary School on the outskirts of Toronto, invites applications from enthusiastic teachers in the following subject areas:
• History • Music • Biblical Studies • English and
• Computer Studies

Please send resumes to the school principal,
W. Barneveld
377 Woodbridge Ave., Woodbridge, ON L4L 2S8

Teachers

Listowel Christian School

Listowel, Ont.

invites applications for the position of

Teaching Principal

for the 1991/92 school year.

We are seeking a leader with a commitment to Jesus Christ for an interdenominational, K-8, school with 150 students.
The applicant should have an enthusiasm for the vision of Christian education and an ability to lead our school community in that vision.
He/she must demonstrate a love for children, be goal-oriented, and be a team player.
Those with varying levels of administrative experience will be considered.

Please forward your resume before **Feb. 23, 1991,** to:
Randy Jolliffe
425 Boyne Ave., Listowel, ON N4W 3K5
Phone: (519) 291-1786

Help Wanted

Redeemer College

invites applications for the following faculty position commencing August 1, 1992 (subject to budgetting approval):

EDUCATION
(tenure-track)

Candidates should be committed to teaching and scholarship from a Reformed Christian perspective, should have elementary teaching experience and should possess (or be prepared to pursue graduate study to earn) a doctorate, preferably with a specialization in curriculum studies: language arts.
For more information contact:

Dr. Justin Cooper
Vice-President (Academic)
Redeemer College
Ancaster, On L9G 3N6

Deadline: Until filled

In accordance with Canadian Immigration requirements, this advertisement is directed only to Canadian citizens and permanent residents.

Redeemer College *A Christian University College*
Ancaster, Ontario L9G 3N6 (416) 648-2131

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Ask for Mr. Snoek; tel. (416) 221-7400

Miscellaneous

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2. include billing address
3. include contact person with phone number

Miscellaneous

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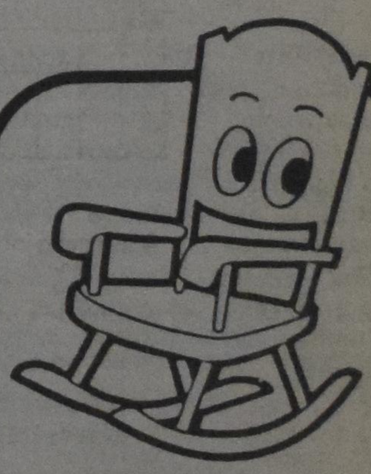

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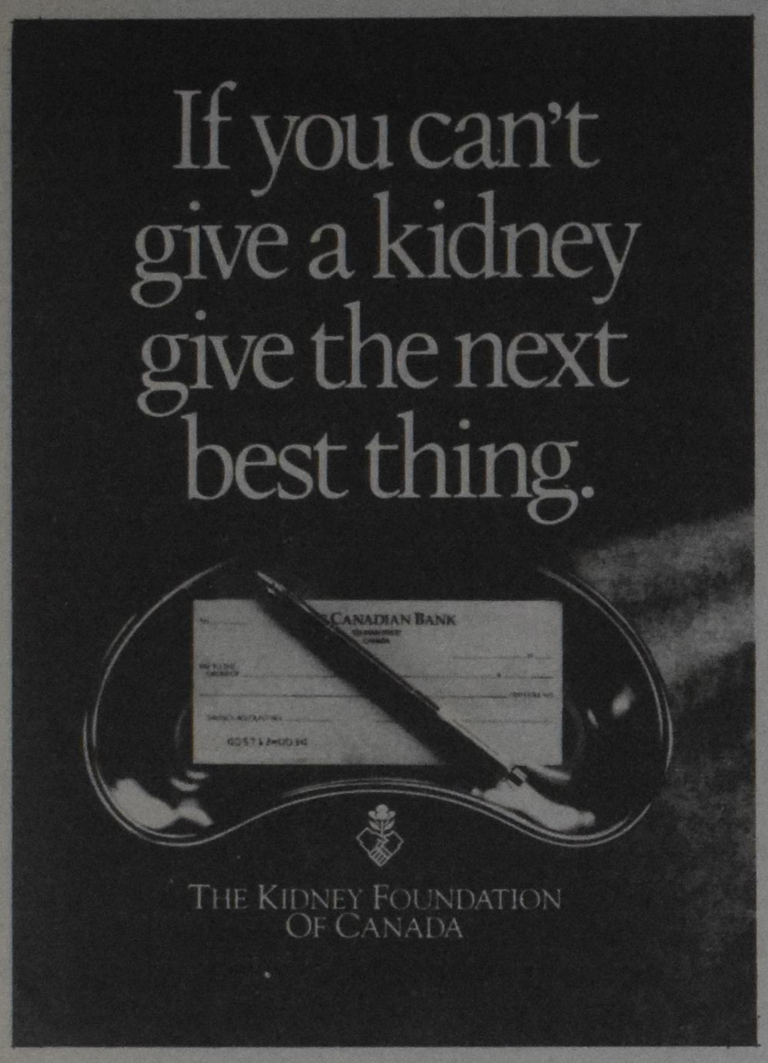
Events



Events

McMaster University Chaplaincy

extends an invitation to attend a

PUBLIC FORUM

"On loving lovers as significant others (can homosexuals become neighbours?)"

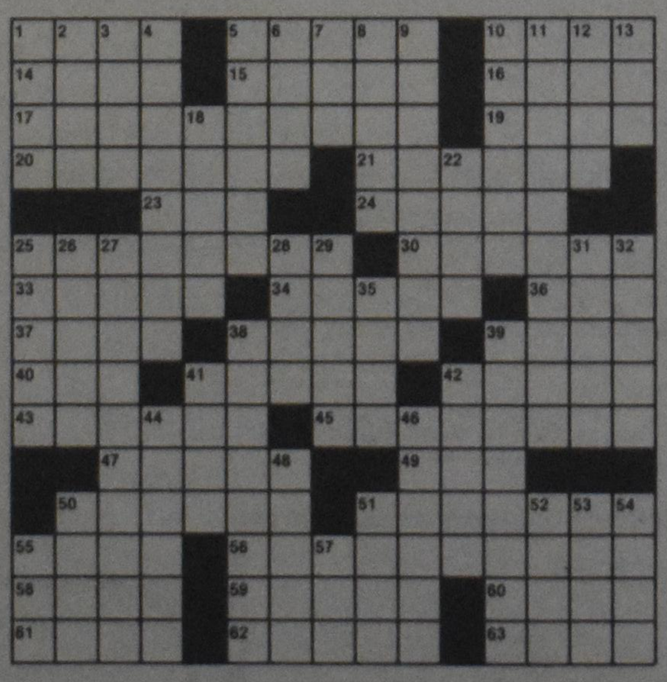
Thursday, Feb. 21, 1991, 8 p.m.
Ewart Angus Hall 1A1
McMaster University
Graham Scott & Hendrik Hart
Moderator: Derk Pierik

For more information, feel free to call:
Rev. Aren Geisterfer at
(416) 525-9140, ext. 4123 (work)
(416) 524-0488 (home)

—ADMISSION FREE—

Weekly Puzzle

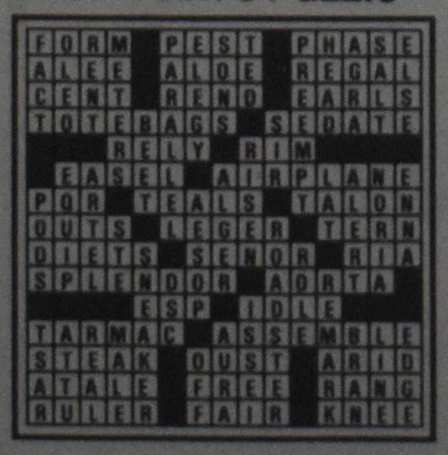
by Samuel K. Fliegner



ACROSS
1 Door frame
5 Despise
10 Religious title: abbr.
14 Winged
15 Hesitate
16 "Moby Dick" captain
17 Extensive
19 Fr. menu item
20 Soft-shell clam
21 In abundance
23 Samovar filler
24 George or T.S.
25 Womanizer
30 Group of nine
33 Son of Jacob
34 Frighten
36 Once called
37 Dock
38 Word with point and four
39 Encircled
40 WA VIP
41 Was inclined
42 Golfer Palmer
43 Deletes
45 Adolescent
47 Carries on
49 Author Fleming
50 Decree
51 "The Sound —"
55 Footless
56 US poet
58 Sailboat
59 Longest Fr. river
60 "— She Sweet"
61 Otherwise
62 A Ford
63 Courses: abbr.

DOWN
1 Shark movie
2 Came down
3 Fabricated
4 Time out
5 Show up
6 Roseanne of TV
7 Tint
8 Indian
9 Warning of imminent danger
10 Abandon in a way
11 Baking fat
12 Total receipts
13 Baseball stat.
18 Defame
22 Queue
25 Expire
26 Willow
27 Strait in NY bay
28 Czech river
29 Certain group
31 Eagle's nest
32 Prevent
35 Assistant
38 Medicated tablet
39 Pebbly
41 Roman supper
42 "What's In —?"
44 Harness part
46 Famous tower
48 Hair net
50 Gemstone
51 Brute
52 Gash
53 Bulwer-Lytton heroine
54 Heft abbr.
55 Yes
57 Brownie

Last Week's Puzzle



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Send your questions to Peter and Marja c/o Calvinist Contact. Confidentiality is assured.

Calendar of Events

Feb. 15	"Come grow with us" music celebration of 48 years of Christian education, from 7:30 - 9 p.m., at the CRC, **Holland Marsh,** Ont.
Feb. 20	RCBPO Hamilton Chapter dessert evening at Redeemer College, **Ancaster,** Ont. Guest speaker: John G. Priestman. Starts 7:30 p.m. For info. call (416) 524-1203.
Feb. 20-25	CSS's Harry Houtman in **Nova Scotia.**
Feb. 21	"Mylon and Brokenheart" in concert, at 7:30 p.m., Redeemer College, **Ancaster,** Ont. Tickets $17 at the door. For info. call (416) 648-2131.
Feb. 21	Public forum at 8 p.m., Ewart Angus Hall 1A1, McMaster University, **Hamilton,** Ont. Theme: "On loving lovers as significant others." Panelists: Graham Scott and Hendrik Hart. Moderator: Derk Pierik.
Feb. 22	Inauguration of the Pascal Centre, 8 p.m., at Redeemer College, **Ancaster,** Ont. Speaker: Dr. A. Plantinga (Notre Dame) on: "When Faith and Reason Clash ...." Free admission.
Feb. 22	CCM (Niagara Chapter) meets at 8 p.m., Bethany CRC, **Fenwick,** Ont. Rev. Gangar to resume study of B.C., Art. 8.
Feb. 22-24	"Finest Wheat" Arts-Concert Festival at Grace CRC, **Scarborough,** Ont. **Feb. 22:** 7:30 p.m., family program with Bill Van Caulart, Christian mime artist, and the Hamilton Children's Choir; **Feb. 23:** 8 p.m., Christiaan Teeuwsen, organist; **Feb. 24:** 6:30 p.m., worship with cellist Kora Kuyvenhoven and with Simon du Toit, and a Redeemer College drama group. For info. call (416) 293-0373.
Feb. 23	All-Day Conference on Alcoholism, 9 a.m., Redeemer College, **Ancaster,** Ont. Sponsored by Salem and Family Outreach-Ontario. Speaker: Rev. Harry Van Dam, Chaplain Calvary Rehab Centre. Pre-registration and $20 fee (lunch incl.) before Feb. 13 to Jane de Haan, R.R.2, Ancaster, ON L9G 3L1, phone (416) 679-6490. Coffee and registration at 8:30 a.m.
Feb. 23	Benefit concert for "Telecare Brampton," by the Canadian Orpheus Male Choir. At 8 p.m., St. Mary's Catholic Church, **Brampton,** Ont. For tickets call (416) 459-8439.
Feb. 24	Concert by Redeemer College Concert Choir, director Christiaan Teeuwsen. At 8:30 p.m., Redeemer College, **Ancaster,** Ont. Free admission.
Feb. 28	RCBPO Cambridge Chapter dinner meeting, at 6:30 p.m., Krebs Restaurant, **Cambridge,** Ont. Speaker: Dr. John Redekop on "Gulf War: Police Action or Just War?" For info. call (416) 524-1203.
Mar. 22	Retirement evening for Mr. Wm. Rang at 7 p.m., Dunnville Christian School, Robinson Rd., **Dunnville,** Ont. For tickets call (416) 774-1523 or 772-5879.

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Event

FINEST WHEAT
Arts Festival

Bill Van Caulart
Christian Mime Artist
Hamilton Children's Choir
7:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 22

Chris Teeuwsen
Organ Concert
8:00 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 23

Cora Kuyvenhoven, *Cellist*
Simon du Toit and
Redeemer College Drama Group
Evening Worship
6:30 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 24

Art exhibits by Willem Hart and Lynne McIlvride Evans

Grace CR Church
McCowan Rd. at Hwy. 401
Scarborough, Ontario
(416) 293-0373

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Books

Robert VanderVennen, book review editor

Christian public policy

Why Christians differ about politics?

The Scattered Voice: Christians at Odds in the Public Square, by James W. Skillen. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990. ISBN 0-310-52451-2. Softcover, $13.50. Reviewed by David T. Koyzis, Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ont.

In recent years increasing numbers of believers have become aware that Christianity has political ramifications and that they are responsible for living out their faith, not only in private life, but also in the public square. Unfortunately, Christians do not speak with one voice and their political witness has fragmented largely along lines marked out by the secular ideologies. Consequently, some groups of Christians decide that they are called to work to reinforce traditional morality and concentrate their efforts on such issues as pornography, homosexuality and the family.

Others became convinced of the need to solve such social ills as poverty, racial discrimination and militarism. Still others believe that the Christian's calling is to enact Old Testament laws in every detail into our contemporary legal codes. How do we evaluate this dizzying diversity of approaches?

This is the question James W. Skillen attempts to confront in his book, whose title reflects the fact that Christians speak with a "scattered voice" in the political arena. Addressing himself primarily to the American scene, Skillen, who is executive director of the Association for Public Justice in Washington, D.C., treats the following groups in separate chapters: pro-American conservatives, cautious and critical conservatives, sophisticated neo-conservatives, traditional and reflective liberals, civil-rights reformers, pro-justice activists, and theonomic reconstructionists. Among the people with whose ideas he interacts are John Eidsmoe, Charles Colson, Richard John Neuhaus, the Catholic bishops, Jesse Jackson, Ronald Sider and Greg Bahnsen, each of whom represents one of these approaches.

Inadequate positions

Skillen rather effectively shows that each of these positions, while resting on legitimate concerns, is in itself inadequate because it does not proceed from a clear recognition of the normative *political* identity of the state and its task within a differentiated human society. Typically, Christians are driven to action by a consciousness of specific evils they would like to eliminate or of a general moral malaise they perceive to have overtaken society as a whole.

But they have not stopped to consider that the sort of changes they envision may be beyond the normative competence of the state and may not therefore call for political action as such. Conservatives and liberals alike too often assume that their country is an undifferentiated moral community over which government stands as the overarching authority. Or if they do recognize limits to the state, they tend to articulate them among the lines set out in the larger American "Liberal" tradition and assume that these are already biblically Christian.

Normative Christian vision needed

What is the alternative? According to Skillen, we must seek to articulate a normative Christian vision of public justice which is firmly anchored in Creation as illuminated by biblical revelation. Among other things, this means that we must come to an understanding of what the state is as a specifically *political* community in a differentiated society and within a rapidly shrinking world. More specifically this implies an awareness that justice is not simply a matter of relating individuals to each other and to the state but also of recognizing the normative reality of a variety of nonstate institutions, such as families, schools, churches, and business enterprises.

Although Skillen writes to an American audience, Canadian Christians will certainly benefit from reading this book. Most of the approaches he analyses are duplicated in some form on our side of the border as well. In fact, *The Scattered Voice* is such an important book that I strongly urge it be read by the leaders of the Christian Heritage Party, Citizens for Public Justice and other similar groups — that is, by those who have assumed responsibility in this country for putting into practice a Christian vision of politics. It neatly cuts through many of the false dilemmas in which we have been caught in recent years.

Finally, a comment should be made concerning the book's peaceable tone. Skillen has a rare talent for critiquing alternative positions without becoming strident or combative. As he treats each of the above-named approaches in turn, he does so in a way that is both incisive and charitable. He is quick to recognize truth where it can be found; at the same time he clearly and painstakingly distinguishes his own reformational position from each of the alternatives. This combination of perceptiveness and generosity is unusual in a political activist and it makes his book that much more helpful.

Report on Sexual Abuse

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Friends of God

Restore us!

"Restore us, O God; make your face shine upon us, that we may be saved" (Psalm 80:3,7,19).

There's a classic novel written by Gabriel Garcia Marquez called *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. It's the story of a village where the people had become infected with a very strange disease. From the outside everything seemed normal: they remained strong and healthy, they continued to function in the usual ways.

But inside their minds the invisible affliction began. Slowly they started to lose their memories. After a while they couldn't remember the names of simple, ordinary objects around them. And then they forgot the names of their friends. And soon they had troubles recalling the names of their husbands, wives and children.

There was one young man who saw what was happening. He knew that it wouldn't be long before he lost his memory too. But for a while he did the only thing he could do: he acted as the memory for the whole village. He started posting little signs all over the place: "THIS IS A TABLE." "THIS IS A WINDOW." "THIS IS A COW; IT HAS TO BE MILKED EVERY MORNING."

Out on the road that led to the village he put up two large signs. The first said: "THE NAME OF OUR VILLAGE IS MACONDO." And the second said this: "GOD EXISTS." It was the last, desperate cry of those who lived in a forgetful world.

Remember, restore, renew

In some way, the prophets and the song-writers of the Old Testament were like that young man. In a world that was stricken with the disease of forgetfulness, in a world that suffered from collective amnesia, in a world that seemed unable to function anymore because of Alzheimer's disease, the prophets and song-writers remembered names. They remembered Jacob and Joseph. They remembered Egypt and Sinai. They remembered something called "The Covenant."

When Asaph penned Psalm 80, he left these instructions with the director of music: "Have the choir sing this anthem to the tune of 'The Lillies of the Covenant.'" There was good reason for him to pick that tune, for his song was a memory song, a sign-post song, a picture song describing the most important scenes from Israel's history. In a few words it sketched a portrait of the relationship God and Israel had shared. That relationship had given identity to both of them, he said.

But now it seems like everyone's losing the memories. Does God remember Israel? Does Israel remember God? And "Covenant" is the best song that Asaph could request.

'Run with all your strength!'

The Desert Fathers used to tell this story. They told of a father and a son who were travelling together. They came to the edge of a forest and some of the bushes there were loaded with berries. They looked *so* delicious that the son asked if they couldn't stop for a while and pick berries.

The father was anxious to be on his way but he saw the desire in his son's eyes and agreed to stay there for a short while. The son was delighted; together they searched the bushes for the biggest, plumpest, juiciest berries.

But then the father knew it was time to move on. He simply couldn't delay any longer. "Son," he said, "we *must* continue our journey."

But the boy begged and pleaded till there seemed no reasoning with him. What could the father do?

This is what he did: he told his son, "you may stay and pick berries a while longer, but I will begin slowly to move down the road. Be sure that you are able to find me, though. While you work, call out to me, 'Father! Father!' and I will answer you. As long as you hear my voice you will know where I am. But as soon as you can no longer hear me, know that you are lost, and run with all your strength, calling out my name!"

If one could tell the story behind Psalm 80, that might be it. And it might be the story of your life right now too. How's your memory! are you calling out for God?

Wayne Brouwer is a pastor at First Christian Reformed Church in London, Ont.